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Missing the Mountains or Being the Children of the Sea (or Not)

A Multi-Method Arts-Based Investigation



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Abstract

The theme of the inquiry is to investigate, through a collaborative arts-based research investigation, how sense of belonging and not-belonging manifest among a group of migrating Faroese people through a storytelling process.

In spring 2018, the artist-researcher collaborated with seven Faroese persons who have past or present experiences in living in Denmark. The thesis inquiry is a multi-method arts-based research investigation that utilises a method devised collaboratively through a guided auto-ethnographic inquiry in dialogue with the facilitating artist-researcher. The co-researchers engage in a 3-part-storytelling process through which they inquire their knowledge and lived experiences using a variety of expressive approaches. The collaborators share their lived experiences as people deriving from a small island nation situated in the midst of the North Atlantic Ocean, but also as people who are a part of the larger realm of the Danish Kingdom.

The theoretical trajectories in the inquiry engage theories on representation and meaning-making, critical pedagogy, as well as collaborative and dialogic art practices, and as an undercurrent, postcolonial theories situated within the Nordic context. The theoretical trajectories provide a framework for critical self-reflection for the artist-researcher throughout the entire research process. This theoretical framework also raises essential ethical questions that inform how the collaboration between the artist-researcher and the collaborators is formulated and carried out. The theoretical trajectories lead towards an ethical approach in which the collaborating people are seen as co-creators of knowledge, as co-researchers and as the creators of their own narratives.

In this collaborative research inquiry, the facilitating artist-researcher applies many roles and becomes for example a mentor, a curator and a sparring partner, who gently guides but does not direct, to keep the co-researchers engaged in a demanding 3-part storytelling process. In addition to the many roles in the inquiry, the artist-researcher becomes a storyteller in order to open up and bring the co-researchers' complex and rich stories that they have shared with her during the collaboration further for a larger audience of readers. The aim is to crystallise, to make the entangling set of rich and complex stories from the co-researchers' varied perspectives visible as a collaborative narrative.

Keywords multi-method arts-based research, belonging, storytelling, dialogic art practices, ethical intervention

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A Multi-Method Arts-Based Investigation

Eija Mäkivuoti
Master's Thesis
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The Theme of this Inquiry

The theme of this inquiry is how sense of belonging and not-belonging manifest among a group of migrating Faroese people through a storytelling process.

In spring 2018, I collaborated in an arts-based investigation with seven Faroese persons who have past or present experiences in living in Denmark. The collaborators are participating with their own names as they share their lived experiences as people deriving from a small island nation situated in the midst of the North Atlantic Ocean, but also as people who are a part of a larger realm of the Danish Kingdom. These seven collaborators come from my extended social media network, some of them I have known prior to this study and some I have met only briefly before. The collaborators come from different fields, some from the creative field and some not.

The theoretical trajectories in this inquiry engage theories on representation and meaning-making, critical pedagogy, as well as collaborative and dialogic art practices, and as an undercurrent, postcolonial theories situated within the Nordic context. The theoretical trajectories provide a framework for critical self-reflection for me as the artist-researcher throughout the entire research process. This theoretical framework also raises essential ethical questions which inform how the collaboration between me, the artist-researcher, and the collaborators is formulated and carried out. The theoretical trajectories lead towards an ethical approach in which the collaborating people are seen as co-creators of knowledge, as co-researchers and as the creators of their own narratives.

This thesis inquiry is a multi-method arts-based research investigation that utilises a method devised collaboratively in where the co-researchers inquire in their knowledge and experiences through a guided auto-ethnographic inquiry in dialogue with me, the facilitating artist-researcher. The arts-based research method provides a passage for different ways of knowing and tapping into notions which are difficult to verbalise, for example in an interview setting. The co-researchers engage in a 3-part-storytelling process through which they inquire their knowledge and lived experiences using a variety of expressive approaches like photography, poems, short texts, spoken word, video and painting. The 3-part-storytelling process consist of different practical tasks to guide the co-researchers to translate their lived experiences into stories, and by asking more questions, I gently guide them to dive deeper into a theme, topic or and insight of which they narrate a finalised story of their choice. In dialogue with me during discussions, both online and in face-to-face sessions, the co-researchers reflect on their personal experiences turned into stories, and connect them, if possible, to a



A Journey across the Ocean to a Faraway Land (photo from Nólsoy, Faroe Islands, after the Discussion Session with Mariann), 02.2018.

larger context than their own personal realm. Writing as a method of inquiry, visual methodologies and elicitation are integral approaches in this 3-part-storytelling process.

In this collaborative research inquiry, I serve as the facilitating artist-researcher, and, among my many roles, become for example a mentor, a curator and a sparring partner, who gently guides but does not direct, to keep the co-researchers engaged in the demanding 3-part storytelling process. In addition to my many roles in this inquiry, I become a storyteller myself in order to open up and bring the co-researchers' complex and rich stories that they have shared with me during this collaboration further for a larger audience of readers. The aim is to crystallise, to make the entangling set of rich and complex stories from the co-researchers' varied perspectives visible as a collaborative narrative.

Setting the Scene – My Interest for the Faroe Islands and Storytelling

On the journeys to the misty islands in midst of the ocean.
On the journeys to this kingdom in which realm these islands dwell.

In the midst of these island people I hear words uttered,
those words, in the hazes brought by the Danish beer (pilsner, damn it, I'm a Classic girl),
embraced by the tunes of Konni Kass, surrounded by the Faroese language,
in the city of Copenhagen, Denmark.

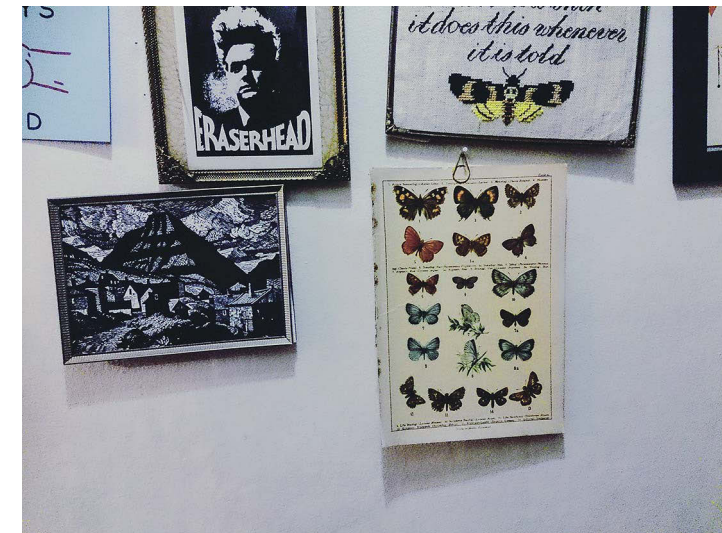
These island people, gather together, here,
to the tunes from their home lands.
This is my very first evening in these flatlands,
the many voices uttering around me, to me.
“We are not Danish.”

Poem, re-written from field notes, 05. 2017

The above documentary poem was written in October 2017 and it's based on my experiences from an evening out together with some of my Faroese friends. It is the first day of my exchange semester in Copenhagen, Denmark. I chose Copenhagen because there is a large Faroese diaspora (Firouz, 2013). I came to know about this because of my previous narrative and visual inquiries as a photographic artist. Since 2008, I have visited the Faroe Islands frequently. During these travels I have engaged in artistic work in collaboration with some people on the Faroese Islands. These encounters with the people and their nation has brought me a passion to investigate this further.

The theme for this inquiry has taken shape as I became curious to find out on how it feels to live between different Nordic cultures or realms as the Faroese people do. The Faroe Islands is a self-governing nation within the Kingdom of Denmark, a part of the Danish commonwealth together with Greenland (Jensen, 2017). What kind of stories can spring from that? How can I collaborate with people so that we can find out more together? And foremost, how can I invite and inspire these people to part-take in this narrative work? I do not want to impose my views, presumptions and insights, trap them in my story of them. There is also a connection to my own experiences, a similarity which I react upon. A part of this passion springs from my own upbringing as a second-generation immigrant in Sweden of Finnish descent and as a migrant in Finland. The situations are not the same, but similar – within the Nordic setting.

In 2015 I published a photo book that tells with photographs and short written stories from and about the Faroe Islands, as well as of my encounters with the Faroese people and their land. Some stories were written by the people I depicted for the book. Oðia Ström wrote a story for the book. In this story she tells about how the young Faroese people in their 20's are absent from the Faroe Islands. With this she meant that they had left home to study abroad. I learned more about this from the Nordic Council of Ministers' report *Megatrends* (2011) which explains, using a statistical fact, that 62% of the Faroese leave home to study abroad. The Faroese anthropologist Gaini Firouz (2013) from the University of the Faroe Islands describes the Faroese people as an island nation in midst of the Atlantic Ocean and he ponders on the Faroese people



Faroe Islands, 2013 / Øresundskollegiet, Copenhagen, 2017 / A friend's hallway art in Copenhagen, 2017 / At Øresundskollegiet, Copenhagen, 2017

who leave home to study in a rather poetic way:

”The islanders are, beloved poems tell, meditating about what is on the other side of the horizon. Young islanders are longing for contact to the world beyond the village community. The geographical isolation has, ironically, to a certain extent encouraged the wanderlust and migration of generations of young Faroe Islanders. If a person decides to migrate out of the country, he will have to cross the ocean and set down in a faraway place. There is no adjacent alternative. The islander leaving home knows that he is taking a big step, which will separate him from his family for a shorter or longer period of time” (Firouz, 2013, p. 31).

This thesis inquiry attempts to find out in its small scope where some of the Faroese people went, how they feel about it and what their experiences are “being faraway”. Together with the Faroese co-researchers, who went across the ocean, we venture into telling a slightly more detailed collaborative story to add to Firouz's narrative. The reasons for leaving the Faroe Islands are more varied within our collaborative narrative.

The theoretical trajectories in this inquiry engage theories on representation and meaning-making, critical pedagogy, as well as collaborative and dialogic art practices, and as an undercurrent, postcolonial theories situated within the Nordic context. The theoretical trajectories provide a framework for critical self-reflection for me as the artist-researcher throughout the entire research process. This theoretical framework also raises essential ethical questions which inform how the collaboration between me, the artist-researcher, and the collaborators is formulated and carried out. The theoretical trajectories lead towards an ethical approach in which the collaborating people are seen as co-creators of knowledge, as co-researchers and as the creators of their own narratives.

On Belonging

As we inquire in notions on belonging I conceptualise what is understood as belonging within this research process. The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography suggests an approach where “belonging is inherently political. Struggles over belonging take place on any field in which traditional power structures are contested” (Taylor, 2009, p. 294-299). Interpreting belonging in this way connects the concept to a politics of belonging where identity politics and politics of place and difference are the central interests of investigation (Taylor, 2009). The word belonging can position this inquiry to fields of studies that I am not familiar with, as this concept marks a position, a possible specific discourse for an inquiry. That is not the point of our collaborative investigation to place it within a specific discourse narrative.

I am, however, influenced by Edward W. Said’s (1984, 2002) use of the word *belonging* in his essay *Reflections on Exile*, which sparks an un-anticipated motion of feelings, thoughts and reflections, and further, an action in me – a second generation immigrant from Sweden of Finnish decent – from an in-between space at the borderlands of “Finnishness” and “Swedishness”, not belonging to either – a space which Said refers to as contrapunctal – an awareness of not just one culture, one setting, one home, but many. This plurality, according to Said, grants an “awareness of simultaneous dimensions” (Said, 1984, 2002, p. 148).

When the word belonging is connected with the word sense it opens up possibilities to explore belonging through the senses which are the affective and corporeal experiences, a belonging in a relation to a place, a culture or a community (Taylor, 2009), and especially from a situation, a position, a vantage point closer to us, our own bodies (Haraway, 1988). This entanglement of the words belonging and sense opens up the embodied and sensorial dimensions as sources where a lived experience of a belonging can emerge from and inform a research inquiry (Pink, 2015).

Of Translators and Narrators

This thesis inquiry draws from Rancière’s philosophy on learning as an intellectual emancipation. I attend the inquiry as a learner, a pupil, which Rancière names as the *ignoramus*. The *ignoramus*, the pupil, she, in Rancière’s story, is diminishing the gulf between her ignorance and the school mas-

ter's knowledge, which is depicted as a path "from what she already knows to what she does not yet know" (Rancière, 2009, p. 11). The aim for this learning is that she can better practise "the art of translating, of putting her experience into words and her words to the test; of translating her intellectual adventures for others and counter-translating the translations of their own adventures which they present to her" (Rancière, 2009, p. 11).

Drawing from Rancière's thought that the emancipated intellectual community is a community of narrators and translators (Rancière, 2009), I expand the above path-of-learning to involve also the collaborators, as we are, in my view, all narrators and translators of the knowledge we produce together within this research inquiry. We as the narrators and translators, as the storytellers, are diminishing the gulf between our knowledges (Rancière, 2009). Further, I extend this thought to account for an agency for the collaborators to narrate their lived experiences themselves as knowledge which take form in their stories.

Seen from this vantage point also the artistic knowledge and the artistic skills, the tools at my disposal, gained through my previous artistic practices, are considered as knowledge. An embodied knowledge, that informs how this thesis inquiry is shaped and how it unravels throughout the entire process. What we venture into in the dialogic art-making practices in this inquiry are the very "translations" and "narrations" of our experiences which we share and discuss collaboratively. Our collaborative translations and narrations further become the joint knowledge of this research. We in this inquiry are all translators and narrators of our own experiences that emerge and shape the mutual dialogue and collaboration (Rancière, 2009).

On Making Meaning and the Construction of Narratives

The artist-researcher as well as the co-researchers are understood to be constructing meaning through the representations, the narratives we produce (Hall, 1997, 2013). Hall argues that meaning is constructed through language, a representational system. A difference between two opposing binaries is needed to construct a meaning, and further, this difference, created by the opposing binaries, is crucial for the construction of meaning (Hall, 1997, 2013). In other words, language relies on a crude and simplifying system which is inherently based on a binary thinking creating difference. How this difference is conveyed to construct a meaning is the very dilemma of representation and raises the need for a critical awareness on who is the narrator of these meanings and what these narrations are used for (Hall, 1997, 2013). This argument forces me into a philosophical pondering on the very basics of the nature of meaning-making through representation, the narratives. As we use language to communicate we are bound by a crude, simplistic representational system that needs difference for the construction of meaning (Hall, 1997, 2013). A system of a binary thinking which in its operational core creates a system of opposing categories and positionalities (Hall, 1997, 2013; Rancière, 2009). I draw from Rancière's suggestion of a blurring and a shifting of the opposing positions created by a binary thinking to counter those categories and opposing positions, to counter a subjugating fixed narrative and meaning (Rancière, 2009).

Salazar argues that "to be aware of the constructed nature of sociocultural rep-

resentations does not mean that people can do without them" (Salazar, 2008, p. 173). To counter the dilemma of representation, of who speaks, of whom and for whom, there is a need to account for "how power enters into the process of cultural translation" (Salazar, 2008, p. 173). Or, in our case, in the construction of the meanings, the narratives (Hall, 1997, 2013). Salazar suggests a way to an ethical approach of "cross-cultural communications that are actually, rather than virtually, decentered and multivocal, that is, through the empowerment of others to participate as equal partners in the conversation of humankind" (Salazar, 2008, p. 173).

From this philosophical pondering and through Salazar's concise suggestion an ethical trajectory to meaning making emerged, towards an ethical production of narratives to counter a fixed structure, to avoid a univocal fixed narrative (Hall, 2013; Rancière, 2009; Salazar, 2008).

What and Where is "art" – Dialogic and Communicative Art Practices

As this inquiry is based on arts-based research practices it is appropriate to define what "art" in this inquiry means. First, the "art" and the "art-making" is simply put telling stories through different artistic approaches. Further, what I consider as "art" and "art-making" is a process in which people collaboratively engage in meaning making by using these different artistic approaches. The core of this "art" is the entire collaborative meaning making process and it is not merely a pursuit of an end product of skilful form. The art-making as a process of construction of meaning using artistic approaches draws on feminist thought on situational knowledges, that lead towards a construction of meaning, a vision and a worldview generated through a sensorial body in encounters with people, places and situations (Hall, 1997, 2013; Haraway, 1988).

As I am interested in other peoples' lived experiences and their being-in-the-world, and to narrate stories about those, an ethical way of narrating these stories of other people's experiences is to collaborate with those people and to construct meanings together (Hall, 1997, 2013; Kester, 2004; Salazar, 2008). I draw on Kester's call for a need to base participatory art practices on an ethical and a dialogic collaborative process (Kester, 2004). The "art-making", the storytelling, is the dialogic and collaborative process in which we, the artist-researcher and the co-researchers, give form and translate our lived experiences, situational knowledges by using different artistic approaches (Haraway, 1998; Rancière, 2009). Lived experiences which are either difficult or impossible to verbalise or to address through questions in an interview setting or merely depicting their outer appearances in photographs (Leavy, 2009; Kallio-Tavin, Suominen & Hernández-Hernández, 2017). And then using the collected material to retell a story about them without them participating in the production of this narrative of them (Kester, 2004; Salazar, 2008).

Finley argues that artistic approaches, "art-making", can be utilised to uncover and reveal structures of power and oppression through collaborative and participatory processes and challenging systems of exploitation and oppression, whatever form they might appear in. She refers to collaboration with marginalised groups and to approaches to give "a voice" to them, something I am critical about to some extent (Finley, 2017) and I am not aiming to marginalise people or to frame them as parts of exploitative systems.

Kester (2004) argues that you as the facilitating artist-researcher need to first inquire your own attitudes and aims in the participatory project you are drafting in order to account for your pre-assumptions and attitudes towards the people one seeks to involve in a participatory project. Kester (2004) argues that many times the facilitators of such project seek to help marginalised people but instead end up making a situation worse as your pre-assumptions and attitudes can derive from something patronizing, from a view that the people participating are in need of transformation, education, lacking something which I might possess (Kester, 2004).

I underline that I do not see the co-researchers' as lacking something, to be in a need for education or a change. I do not see them as marginalised or exotic people either, even if we come from different cultural backgrounds. Faroese culture is a specific version of a Nordic culture and as such intriguing, magical and to some extent easy to exotise or narrate as something mythical and mystical because of a supposed viking ancestry as is the case also with Iceland (Lóftsdóttir, 2011, 2012, 2015). Hence, the artistic dialogic approach is as well an ethical intervention to pursue understanding of people's different ways of living in different situations and an awareness that these stories within this research inquiry are created through these situations (Haraway, 1988; Kester, 2004).

The "art" emerged from my previous practices as a visual storyteller as well. How I interpret and produce meanings and narratives influences the ways of inquiring and producing knowledge within this research inquiry. I am unable to separate the artist from the researcher, hence they are entangled and interdependent, as an artist-researcher facilitating a process where making stories as "art" is a collaborative, ethical and communicative process (Kester, 2004). Since I am trained as a visual artist and a photographer a lot of my meaning making and knowledge construction as representations (Hall, 1997, 2013) relies on making visual representations as insights and reflections on the philosophical pondering and the theoretical trajectories that frame how we collaborate and create meaning in this research inquiry. I use these narrative skills to engage the people partaking as storytellers, to making art as a way of knowing (Leavy, 2009, 2017; Kallio-Tavin, et. al., 2017). The theoretical conceptualisations intervene, disrupt and become practice through the dialogic collaboration where art-making is involved (Kester, 2004).

An In-Between Space. The Postcolonial Theories Situated in A Nordic Context

Bhabha argues that stereotyping and the construction of a colonial discourse is an interplay of multiple modes of discourse and that using only one mode of discourse to examine this construction would be too simplistic (Bhabha, 1983, 1994, 2002). He suggests that the postcolonial subject is a complex set of interconnections, and in an intersection of the Lacanian Imaginary and Freudian psychoanalysis something emerges that he refers to as "the apparatus of colonial power" (Bhabha, 1983). Within this apparatus a modern set of systems and sciences of governments, progressive "Western" forms of social and economic organisation co-exist that provide the manifested justification of the project of colonisation (Bhabha, 1983). He further argues that "colonial discourse" produces the colonised as a fixed reality which is at once an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible. It resembles a form of narrative whereby the productivity and circulation of subjects and signs are bound in a reformed and recognisable totality" (Bhabha, 1983, p. 23).

The aim of this inquiry is not to examine and name structures that create a post-colonial subject but rather to use the postcolonial notions and awareness of what constitutes a colonial discourse to imagine new ways of countering the fixed ideas which operate within "a colonial discourse" and to counter the fixed narratives which are applied in this construction (Bhabha, 1983, 1994, 2002; Ching, 2017; Hall, 1990, 1997, 2013). The idea of "un-fixing a narrative" draws from the thoughts of cultural theorist Stuart Hall who argues that a person's identity formation is a process in constant transformation which opposes essentialist conceptualisations of a fixed identity or a fixed origin (Bhabha, 1983, 1994, 2002; Ching, 2017; Hall, 1990). Hall's argument acknowledges that people come from some place, that they have a history, a culture, or community through which they frame their conceptualisation of the world but that this place is constituted discursively and their meaning in a constant flux (Ching, 2017; Hall, 1990). These places or locations can then be used as starting points for any discussion or analysis (Ching, 2017; Hall, 1990). Without that place there is no position from which to begin and "we would indeed become nothing more than a series of fractured constructs scattered to the winds of discourse" (Ching, 2007, p. 75).

The postcolonial theories deriving for example from the founding father of the postcolonial field of studies, Edward Said, address the opposing entities "the Orient" and "the Occident", which are not applicable as analytical models in the Nordic setting as such, but despite this, his theories address the "construction of the colonial discourse", the grand narrative how a colonial subject is created through fixed narratives and a binary system of representation (Bhabha, 1994, 2002; Hall, 1997, 2013; Said, 1978). Danish scholar Blaagaard argues for an awareness to question the conditions from postcolonial studies and theoretical models from different contexts, e.g. from the British or US setting, and for an account of the specific conditions in works investigating the Nordic setting (Blaagaard, 2006). Since her article, more postcolonial and critical whiteness studies have emerged within the Nordic setting that account for the specific context of the postcolonial Denmark and Denmark as a colonising nation, both historically but also in the present times (Blaagaard, 2006; Jensen, 2017; Lóftsdóttir, 2011, 2012, 2015).

The Indian postcolonial scholar Sayan Chottopadhyay suggests a new reading and transformation of the postcolonial as a field of studies (Chottopadhyay, 2017). He suggests that the postcolonial theories can be used as a theoretical framework, as an awareness that enlightens approaches to research as ethical interventions (Chottopadhyay, 2017). As ethical interventions that counter the rigid thoughts and the oppressive powers in operation that create systems of colonialisms throughout different realms (Chottopadhyay, 2017). He suggests putting effort into the creation of new narratives that counter structures of oppression (Chottopadhyay, 2017). Chottopadhyay (2017) further argues that there are different versions of colonialisms at work, in different times and places – and a need for an awareness on how the "colonial thought" of supremacy, subjugation and exploitation constantly transform into new forms of oppression of people of the world, and further, that this thought is very much alive (Chottopadhyay, 2017).

Hence, in my reading, Chottopadhyay suggests ways to use the postcolonial theories as an awareness to create change as well as to inform and to call for critical reflection on how one as a person, as an artist and as a researcher acts and performs in the world in order to be able to counter these forces of oppressive, fixed narra-

tives. I use Chottopadhyay's suggestion and devise the theoretical trajectories as a framework for this critical self-reflection to inform the research design as an ethical intervention. Rather than mapping out, accounting for and representing structures of oppression constituted within the realm of Denmark, I listen and learn to listen to people living within this realm, and work together with them in dialogue to account for their narratives from an in-between space within the Danish realm and Danish-Faroese relation (Bhabha, 1994, 2002; Chottopadhyay, 2017; Jensen, 2016).

Bhabha (1983) reminds us not to be too simplistic in our approach and accounts. Blagaard (2006) underlines the importance of a broad understanding of the context and the setting for the works. And further, Chattopadhyay puts in motion a chain of thought which may start a process of change, influences an awareness on how colonial thought and discourse are created as representations, and how those operate through fixed narratives (Bhabha, 1983; Chattopadhyay, 2017; Hall, 1997, 2013). Chattopadhyay argues that we are not living in a "post-colonial" world, that the different versions of colonialisms are exhausted and over but that the "colonial thought" of subjugating power, oppression and exploitation, transforms and is very much alive in our present, everyday lives and realms as forms of neo-colonialisms (Chattopadhyay, 2017).

The "colonial thought" that takes shape in fixed narratives that can be used to subjugate others, as a kind of violence in thought that can also take more tacit forms as brutal force in order to subjugate others, whatever the purpose for this exploitation is, for example economic profit. I extend the awareness of the postcolonial critique into the very foundation of thought that creates a possibility for subjugating other people by fixing them in a narrative. This is a small account on a personal level to counter those oppressing forces of fixed narratives (Bhabha, 1983, 1994, 2002; Chottopadhyay, 2017; Hall, 1997, 2013).

The Ethical Intervention Framed by the Theoretical Trajectories

This inquiry is foremost interested in exploring and presenting what emerges through the co-researchers' stories without the need to place these stories of belonging into a specific context or politics by force – it is rather interested in what kind of senses or notions of belonging are shaped into being through storytelling. I keep the options open for a more diverse use of the word belonging and what it is made to mean by the different co-researchers, what manifestations of belongings spark their stories and art-making. The word belonging is an opening into an inquiry that is open to multiple meanings, multiple perspectives and understandings of what it means to belong to some-thing, some-place, some-one.

This awareness of Denmark as a colonising nation is an undertone in this inquiry (Jensen, 2017; Lóftsdóttir, 2011, 2012, 2015). Rather than situating the co-researchers as "postcolonial subjects" within those analytical models it is of interest in this study to be open to the co-researchers' own interpretations as well as not to force an image of a colonising Denmark as a part of the co-researchers' stories. Denmark is present and emerges within those stories but how, that is up to the co-researchers.



Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): Telling Stories Differently, 04.2018

This inquiry is an attempt to embrace an in-between space from where something yet-not-known can emerge. In that in-between, in the plurality of dimensions, an ethical approach emerges where the people part-taking, their stories or senses of belonging are not trapped or defined into a pre-decided discourse, one dimension, one narrative, subjugated, labelled or mapped into a specific kind of belonging (Bhabha, 1994, 2002; Chattopadhyay, 2017; Hall, 1997; Rancière, 2009; Said, 1984, 2002). The storytelling emerges through an ethical, dialogic and communicative collaboration (Chattopadhyay, 2017; Kester, 2004; Salazar, 2008).

Methodology

This thesis inquiry applies a multi-method arts-based research inquiry (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Finley, 2017, Kallio-Tavin, Suominen & Hernández-Hernández, 2017; Leavy, 2009, 2017; McNiff, 2008) that utilizes a method devised collaboratively where the co-researchers inquire their knowledge and experiences through a guided auto-ethnographic (Suominen, 2003, 2008) inquiry in dialogue with me, the facilitating artist-researcher. It incorporates different expressive approaches in a storytelling process specifically devised for this inquiry (McNiff, 2008).

Visual methodologies, (photo) elicitation (Rose, 2013) and writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) are employed as parts of the storytelling process, which both initiate a start in the storytelling process as well as facilitate a dialogue about and through the produced stories (Rose, 2013). This means that the artist-researcher and the co-researchers are producing and collecting visual imagery and writing texts. Elicitations and discussions are fueled by the produced visual and textual narratives.

I apply writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) throughout the entire research process, and as Richardson and St. Pierre suggest, the interpretation and the analysis are not defined as specific, separate parts, but emerge throughout the entire research process, as well as in and through dialogue with the co-researchers. The above mentioned method is entangled with the method of crystallisation (Kuby, 2014; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) when presenting and exploring different ways of narrating a multi-perspective and multi-layered collaborative story and further, the research narrative of the storytelling process and the research inquiry itself.

Photography is a way for me to write field notes, to make notes on insights and interpretations, in a method I call Crystallization as Visual Thinking where I draw from crystallization as a method (Kuby, 2014; Richardson, 2005). A visual essay (Rose, 2013) of a series of these “Visual Thinking (Crystallization)” photographs are presented as interpretations when reflecting on theory and practice as well as on the storytelling process, the construction of representations and on the collaboration with the co-researchers.

A Storytelling Process as a Multi-Method Arts-Based Research Method

Arts-based research (ABR) is a holistic approach and it is not merely a method of collecting data by using art-making (Leavy, 2017). In ABR, art and science intertwine, and within it art and art-making are considered a way of knowing, as a way to produce different kind of knowledges. Some aspects of this knowledge that are in use can be difficult to verbalise (Leavy, 2009) and that “language has difficulty reaching” (Kallio-Tavin, Suominen & Hernández-Hernández, 2017, p. 105). Kallio et. al. further elaborate that what seems “mystical and transcendental may be intuitive and sensorial knowledge, something that does not translate into the kind

of spoken language we are used to when unpacking research information” (Kallio-Tavin et. al., 2017, p.105). Barone and Eisner argue that an ABR approach can provide ways to inquire complex and often subtle interactions and provide ways to image those interactions noticeable, without a need to make claims about states of affairs, but rather, as “as a heuristic through which we deepen and make more complex our understanding of some aspect of the world” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 3). The ABR approach utilised within this research inquiry applies a variety of different artistic methods and through these we reach partly beyond symbolic language as we inquire and deepen our understanding of a complex phenomena. This in my reading requires an engagement into meaning-making from multiple perspectives and approaches. Kallio-Tavin et. al. argue that “symbolic language works differently than sensorial, felt, aesthetic, and embodied knowledge. Very often, that kind of knowledge is embodied, founded on experience, and materializes in various forms throughout the research process” (Kallio-Tavin et. al., 2017, p.105).

McNiff accounts for the experimental nature of ABR when he argues that the art-based researchers are willing “to design methods in response to the particular situation, as contrasted to the more general contemporary tendency within the human sciences to fit the question into a fixed research method. The art of the art-based researcher extends to the creation of a process of inquiry” (McNiff, 2008, p. 33). ABR is the key practice in this thesis inquiry and the design of the research embraces the experimental nature of these practices as a defining quality. In other words, the artist-researcher creates a specific process for this inquiry.

Finlay argues for the ABR as a method for inquiring into social aspects as well as it opens up possibilities for activist and participatory interventions, in which it is possible to take into account educational, critical and ethical aspects within the research inquiry (Finley, 2008). My approach in this experimental, critical and collaborative intervention is foremost to take into account the ethical aspects that such a collaborative practice raises. This especially entangles the theoretical trajectories which shape how this inquiry is considering the participants as co-researchers and their position in the inquiry as co-creators of knowledge and as co-narrators. From a radical, ethical and participative approach Finley argues that the “arts-based inquiry can explore multiple, new, and diverse ways of understanding and living in the world” (Finley, 2008, p. 6).

A Guided Auto-Ethnography as a part of the Storytelling Process

This storytelling process utilises a method of a guided auto-ethnography which draws from the auto-ethnography approach by Suominen to study the construction of the self (identity) as something relational (Suominen 2003; Suominen Guyas, 2008). This investigation is shaped through us involved in this research inquiry into a collaborative auto-ethnography, through a process of storytelling entwined with a dialogic approach. I as the facilitating artist-researcher serve as

a guide for the co-researchers as they engage in their own auto-ethnographic inquiry. In this collaborative auto-ethnography I gently guide the co-researchers to inquire in their personal experiences, in their “own stories”, and further in the inquiry where they relate these personal experiences, if possible, to a larger socio-cultural context. For this I sketched a 3-part-storytelling process with different tasks and discussion sessions (McNiff, 2008). Suominen (2003, 2008) suggests that the environment impacts (us) people and our views of ourselves. She argues that “the impact of landscape, environment, and their representations is known to have a deep effect on how people perceive themselves, culture, and especially “nationness” (Suominen 2003, 2008). This is what we use as a start for the guided auto-ethnography as the co-researchers engage in a task in which they tell a story of themselves with images and short texts. This proves to not be easy after all.

A Decision to Use Multi-Method Artistic Approaches

I realise and find out before the actual collaboration with the co-researchers that one method of artistic expression for the storytelling is not enough if it is to address complex and rich accounts of lived experiences from multiple perspectives and to account for the multiple layers of “meanings” produced by the co-researchers. An encounter in spring 2017 with an “introvert musician” on the Faroe Islands influences this awareness and the choice to utilise a multiple artistic approaches and mediums. This musician told me that if he were to take part in such a research inquiry, he would need to compose, to record the first falling snow on video, or to write some lyrics to describe it – instead of a dialogue or an interview – as he said he would have nothing to say in an interview. This led to my decision that the expressive forms, the artistic approaches, used in this storytelling process need to be varied – as a choice for the co-researchers to make, a decision on how to tell their stories, their “art”. The multiple expressive forms which the co-researchers create serve also as adding different layers to a multi-layered story as well as it explores different ways of narrating something which might not be possible to verbalise in a spoken language. Hence, also prior encounters with people before the actual start of the storytelling process are accounted for and even if this specific person is not a part of this research inquiry, in a way he is, influencing the way the research design is devised.

Writing as a Method of Inquiry Entangled with Crystallization

Writing as a method of inquiry focuses on the researcher as the tool, on the language as a construct which constructs the self and the social reality in a relation to its historical and local context (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). The method suggested by Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) can be used as a reflexive method to unveil the position of the researcher in the research. They also argue that writing is validated as a method of knowing and that language “does not reflect social reality but rather produces meaning and creates social reality” (Richardson & St.

Pierre, 2005, p. 961). They further argue that language constructs one’s subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) suggest that the researcher can dig deeper into the topic of the research through writing, to be both creative and analytical. There is also a human aspect to the entire idea of writing and academic research and using it as a tool to understand oneself better, and hence, to also understand the research topic and the world we all reside in more in-depth – the interconnections in it, reaching towards something unknown, yet-not-seen or not foreseeable, not pre-existent. It is alright to not know everything at once, to not only write about one truth as the worlds inside-outside us are complex, with myriads of stories and dimensions. Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) argue that writing is “to produce different knowledge and producing knowledge differently”. This thesis research inquiry draws upon this notion of writing as “a method of knowing” and of “producing knowledge differently” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) and both me and the co-researchers use writing as a method of inquiry.

Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) present different examples how the researchers can reflect on their own academic writing and ways to representing the research findings and the entire research process. I consider many of them as useful for this thesis investigation. Re-writing the field notes or parts of the interpretations into a poem or short narratives sounds groundbreaking, interesting and of value to this critical arts-based research process. I extend the writing also to writing with visual images as one language that construct meaning in this thesis inquiry.

I entangle the concept of crystallisation with writing as a method of inquiry as suggested by Richardson (2005) and Kuby (2014). Richardson argues that “crystallization provides us a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding on the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know” (Richardson, 2005, p.963). Kuby argues that writing about an experience in different ways, e.g. short stories and poems, and analysing experiences through photographs can help the researcher, and I would argue also the co-researchers, in sorting out experiences and how those experiences shape us as human beings, researchers and artists or storytellers (Kuby, 2014). Kuby (2014) further argues that crystallisation as a process draws upon multiple genres for writing and analysis which further enable the “researchers to disrupt more traditional processes of analysis and styles of (re)presentation” (Kuby, 2014, p. 130). We adapt this approach of crystallisation through multiple genres of writing and using visual images as a part of interpretations, as a part of the storytelling process. I adapt crystallisation further as I write this grand research narrative, in which the themes and topics in the co-researchers’ stories are accounted for as complex entanglements of experiences, feelings and insights. This was a way to dig deeper, to embrace the multiple and varied perspectives that emerged throughout the entire research process and as individual and collaborative entanglements.

Further Ethical Considerations

Davies argues that research that is done covert, hiding the aim, the purpose or the methods of research can be considered unethical. She argues that “a covert collection of information is also a form of exploitation as well as a betrayal of trust in personal relationships” (Davies, 2002, p. 54). The aim of this thesis inquiry is to be as transparent and non-exploitative as possible. St. Pierre writes eloquently that she needs to be worthy of the co-researchers’ in her inquiries (St. Pierre, 2005). To be worthy of the co-researchers’ trust is crucial for me as the facilitating artist-researcher because they share personal, and on some level, very intimate insights and feelings of their real lived experiences. I am aware that I can not take all shared stories and insights into account when presenting this research narrative, as it can make the co-researchers’ vulnerable.

As the co-researchers are co-creators of knowledge and produce this knowledge through their stories and the artworks during the storytelling process, it is important to clarify my researcher position to avoid situations which raise ethical concerns. I have made my researcher position and my role in the research clear and was transparent. With this I mean that I have made my facilitating role in the research clear. As the co-researchers’ are co-producing knowledge and creating stories and “artworks” I account for their copyrights and credit them for their own work. It’s important to ask for consent and give the co-researchers’ an agency on what material is published in this thesis inquiry, as well as for validation and feedback from the co-researchers’ on how I am depicting them in this thesis presentation. I account for the co-researchers’ position ethically, as well as critically evaluate my actions and power as a researcher (Rose, 2013).

I have negotiated with the co-researchers on their need for anonymity. I asked them if it is possible that they collaborate with their own faces and names and they accepted my proposition. In this way, I argue, I can grant them full credit for the stories and the artworks they have produced, as well as I can account for their collaboration throughout the research process as an ethical dialogic approach (Kester, 2004; Rose, 2013) and for their participation as co-creators of the knowledge within this thesis inquiry. Rose argues that the need for anonymity of the research participants is questioned by visual methods researchers, and further, that making a person or a place anonymous might also be considered dehumanising and disrespectful (Rose, 2013). It is important to me to be able to explain to the co-researchers what the research is about and what it might imply to take part in the research which both Davies (2002) and Rose (2013) underline. I had this in mind when I gave them a description of the research design. In my reading anonymity and consent, as well as making the research, and the position of the researcher, clear to the co-researchers, are entwined. I am considering the co-researchers’ consent as an ongoing process throughout the entire research project (Rose, 2016).

The Different Methods Entwining as the Storytelling Process

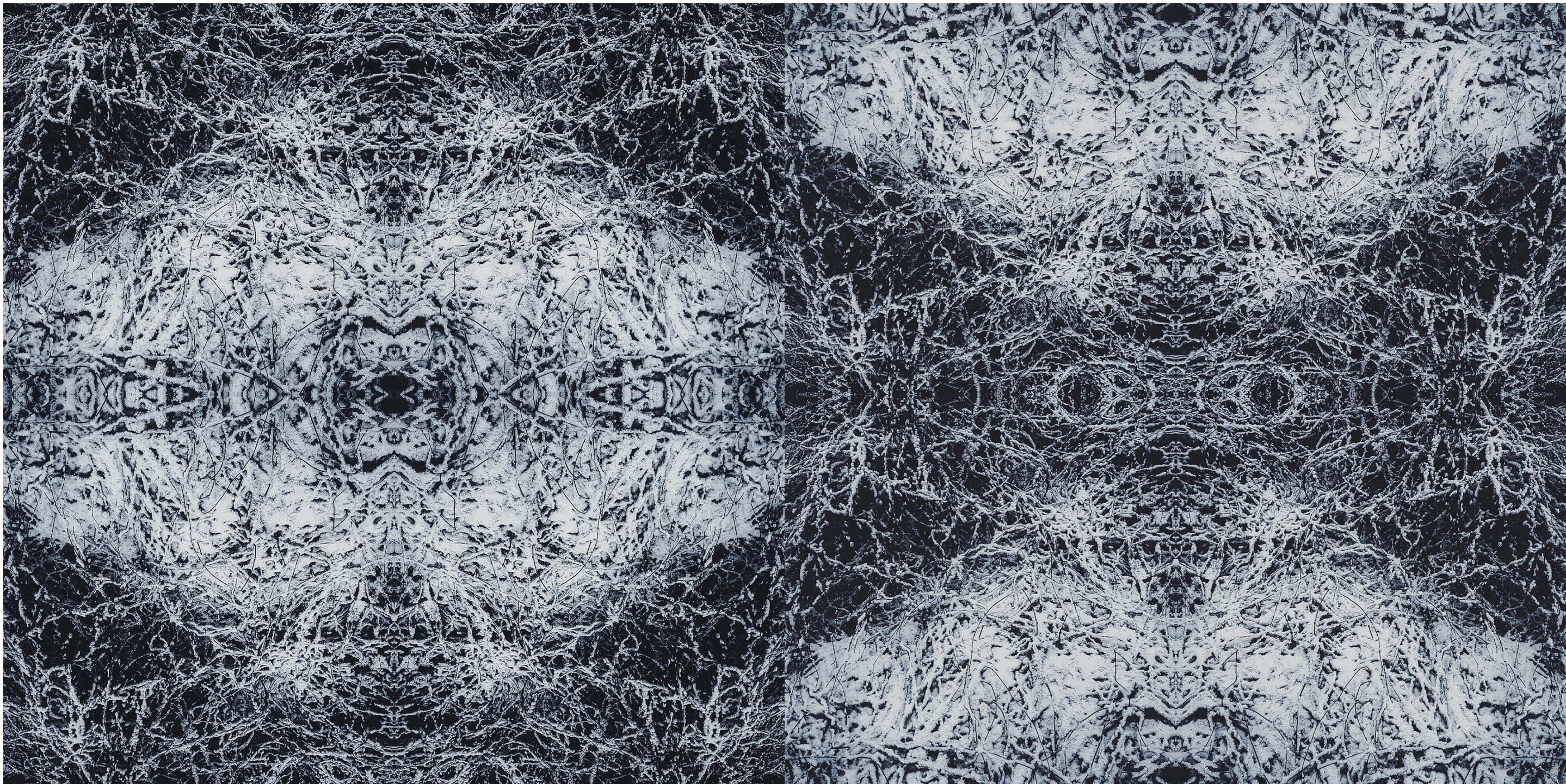
Inspired by McNiff’s (2008) experimental notions on ABR, by the notions on ABR

described before (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Finley, 2017; Kallio-Tavin, Suominen & Hernández-Hernández, 2017; Leavy, 2009, 2017), by the notions on auto-ethnography (Suominen 2003, Suominen Guyas, 2008) and by the notions on writing as a method of inquiry in entanglement with crystallization (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Kuby, 2014) I draft an ABR method especially for this inquiry, utilising a storytelling process. This storytelling process is partly devised together with the co-researchers to facilitate the collaboration between me, the artist-researcher, and them. This specific multi-method approach draws from different pre-existing models of methods and approaches to inquiry as formulated before, but also draws from my practical knowledge gained through previous narrative and visual inquiries as a photographic artist. The storytelling process is formed and refined through the encounters and communication between me, the artist-researcher, and the co-researchers, and is conducted both online and in face-to-face situations throughout the entire research process.

This devised method of storytelling addresses a complex and rich set of lived experiences as the co-researchers express their notions of belonging through different stories and artworks. The experimental approach that McNiff (2008) suggests as research design allows for flexibility for the design to be adapted and formed throughout the entire research process. It is guided by the challenges we face, the choices we make, it is open to alterations and refinement through the encounters and situations between us as we conduct the collaboration in practice. There is also a level of experimentation regarding the use of a multiple range of artistic approaches for creating the stories and the “artworks”.

We use storytelling, “art-making”, as a way of knowing and as a way to generate different kinds of understandings of what belonging means for the different co-researchers who engage in this inquiry. Baron & Eisner argue that “arts-based research (ABR) emphasises the generation of forms of feelings that have something to do with understanding some person, place, or situation. It is simply a quantitative disclosure of an array of variables. It is the conscious pursuit of expressive form in the service of understanding” (Barone & Eisner, 2011, p. 7).

In the following chapter I present the storytelling process in more detail and elaborate on how we apply the different methods and tools described in this methodology section. I further describe this multi-method ABR approach through each co-researcher’s individual storytelling processes and present the topics they chose to look deeper into in their stories and artworks. Through this narrative of utilising of the storytelling process I account for my honesty and my ethical responsibility when I “make visible the process, related choices, and the reasoning behind it” (Kallio-Tavin, Suominen & Hernández-Hernández, 2017, p. 105). Kallio et. al (2017) further argue that by accounting for these different phases throughout the entire research process the “arts-based or artistic researchers commit to reflexivity, continuous analyses, and pledge to find ways to give accessible form to the research experience and all the ethical and ontological choices that direct the process” (Kallio-Tavin, Suominen & Hernández-Hernández, 2017, p. 105).



Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): Theoretical Trajectories and Methodology Intersecting, 05.2018

Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): Space Made for Storytelling, 05.2018

Space Made for Storytelling

In this chapter I describe in practical terms and step by step the collaborative research we conducted together with the co-researchers. This storytelling process applies a multi-method arts-based research inquiry that utilizes a method devised collaboratively where the co-researchers inquire about their situational and relational knowledges and lived experiences through a guided auto-ethnographic inquiry in dialogue with me, the facilitating artist-researcher. It incorporates different expressive approaches in a storytelling process. I describe this storytelling process, how it was designed and how it took its various shapes in the co-researchers' individual storytelling processes, through the dialogue, the encounters and through the tasks at hand. The design of the storytelling process draws from multiple methods as described in the previous methodology section.

Meet The Co-Researchers, the Storytellers

In spring 2018, I collaborated with seven Faroese co-researchers who have experiences in living in Denmark. Some have lived there for a short while, some a few years, some have moved there just recently. Some move back and forth between the two counties and some have moved back to the Faroe Islands. The co-researchers living in Denmark are Mai Jacobsen, Bjartur Fríði Clementsen, Saga Kapna and Fríði Djurhuus. The co-researchers living in the Faroe Islands are Mariann Hansen, Bjarni Nattestad and Maud. Some of the co-researchers are artists and some are not. Some are academics, and some are not. Some make or play music and some not. Some are more skilled in using written words and some are not. Some tell stories better through spoken word than written text or visual images. It is a random mix of Faroese people from my social media network who are in their 20's and their 30's. I invited far more people than those who accepted, and these seven accepted my invitation to become part of this research investigation. They all give their consent and act with their real names and faces. I am glad that I can give them full credit for their own storytelling and as co-researchers in this research inquiry. Their engagement and their storytelling processes are the core of this thesis inquiry. The co-researchers' individual storytelling processes are presented in more detail in the next section.

Inviting the Co-Researchers Into A Process of Storytelling

Next I will describe how I invited, introduced and engaged the co-researchers in a multi-method arts-based research inquiry, or as I refer to it from here onwards, "the storytelling process". There are many failed attempts to start the process and to find co-researchers as it was hard to explain to the people I met face-to-face what the research is about. I realised that a clear way to describe to the potential co-researchers what I am asking them to part-take in and how, is lacking. I needed a clarifying description, an initial tacit plan for the practical part, and something to start the process with, a way into the actual storytelling. For this purpose, I made a detailed and comprehensive description of the "research plan" to be able to explain to the people I invited, to the potential co-researchers, what I was asking them to part-take in and how. This description became a 28-page-slide presentation in which I attempted to present what the research is thought or planned

to be about, in-practice, as clearly as possible, without any academic jargon. Making this slide presentation as a part of the research design and the plan for the collaboration with the co-researchers also clarified for me, in practical terms, a structure, a plan which we can use to start this collaboration. I acknowledge that of course it will change and it re-forms throughout the collaboration. Despite this, this "3-part-storytelling-plan" proved to be a purposeful way to shed some light on what the co-researchers could expect from the suggested collaboration. And that the people I invited can evaluate if they have the possibility, interest and time to part-take in the collaborative research inquiry.

Equipped with this 28-page-presentation, I contacted the people I talked with before and who expressed an interest during prior encounters. Many said no. I adapted a new strategy to flip through my networks on Facebook of Faroese people I have met during my ten years I have been visiting the nation. I also asked for suggestions of people who might be interested. This random method worked better. First there was a group of nine people who wanted to participate, but two had to quit because of various reasons. Eventually, a group of seven people emerged who participated as co-researchers in this collaborative thesis inquiry.

This sketch for a research design, the 28-page-slide-presentation, is both an invitation and an explanation for the co-researchers to be, of what the aim of this suggested research collaboration is imagined to be. The included initial plan for a 3-part-storytelling was imagined to create an imaginary space to facilitate in practice a collaborative storytelling process that I drafted in order to guide the co-researchers to inquire about the lived experiences, feelings and insights on their sense of belonging, in their own words, through their own narratives. Foremost, the aim was to find a way to start the collaboration from a distance, as I was located in Finland and they in Denmark and the Faroe Islands.

The plan for the storytelling process the co-researchers engage in is presented next in more detail. First, how it was initially drafted, how I imagine the collaboration and the storytelling, then how it was reshaped and evolved throughout the collaboration, and further, I describe how the co-researchers conducted their storytelling processes in dialogue with me, the facilitating artist-researcher.

The Storytelling Plan Imagined: Description for the Co-Researchers

Each co-researcher engaged in a 3-part-storytelling process that entwines an arts-based method with a guided auto-ethnographic method as described in the previous chapters. In this storytelling process the co-researchers explore and narrate their lived experiences as stories about their life. Next is a short description of the collaborative research and the practical 3-part-plan I introduce to the co-researchers to engage in. Before any "practical tasks for storytelling", I attempt to explain what my philosophy for this research inquiry is, what I mean by ABR research in this context and what their part in the research is imagined as co-researchers.

As the practical collaboration I introduce "an initial 3-part-plan", which developed

Part 1: Tell About Yourself / Tell Your Story Using Visual Images & Short Texts

Make a series of 10-15 images that in your view tells about you and/or your story. It can be:

- images you have made yourself (mobile photos/Instagram photos, drawings, paintings, photos from family albums or such, etc.)
- or other found images (clippings, postcards, digital photos, etc.) or objects (take a photo of them to be shared. Please keep them, so they can be documented in a photo session in part 3).

Make a short text to the images (one text or to each photo separately) you made or found (where you describe the following): Why did you choose the images? What do you want to tell me with these images? What do they tell about you and your story? You can also give titles to the images.

We will discuss the images and what comes up through these stories, will lead us to part 2).

Part 2: Use an expressive form of your choice to deepen the story of you

In this part we continue creating expressive forms about the questions or topics that are raised through discussion about the stories made in part 1 (Eija will give more detailed directions after part 1 is done).

The form of expression is free. You can choose to continue to make photographs/images and to write about them, or you can use an expressive form that feels comfortable to you (I might not be able to imagine all the possibilities, do not feel restricted by the examples I give you, examples in next slide). Along the expressive form, please keep "a diary/a log" of thoughts, ideas and insights, that might pop-up, when you are making the task.

Part 3: We talk about your stories (the expressive forms) in a face-to-face session (in Denmark and in the Faroe Islands depending on where you live)

When you, the co-researcher, have created "the stories" (the art, the expressive forms), I will meet the you in a face-to-face session, where we discuss your stories.

In this session we discuss your stories, and look for insights together, which are based on the created material (which touch upon the research topic). These sessions will be recorded (audio or video) as I need to make notes of what we discuss (these are not published or used without your consent). In addition I will make documentary poetry notes (write stories and take photographs) of and in these sessions.

This is done in individual meetings, depending on the co-researchers wishes on anonymity and the form of collaboration (intimate, personal discussion between Eija and the co-researcher) or it can be a more open discussion as a group (can be decided later).

Slide 17. Slide 19. Slide 24. from the 28-page-slideshow

into something that I now call a 3-part-storytelling-process. As I am not including the entire 28-page-slide presentation I describe the "initial 3-part-plan" in some words as well as demonstrate the "initial plan" with some slides.

Plan for the the 3-part-storytelling process

Below I describe as simply as possible what I asked from the co-researchers and include some notes on how it started to re-form. On the previous page, I demonstrate some slides as examples from the 28-page-slide presentation.

1. *My Story, Discussions and the Choice of a Theme to Dig In Deeper*

As a first task, I asked the co-researchers to tell their own story with 10-15 images, found or made by themselves, joint with short texts. The task included some initial questions that aimed to guide the co-researchers what to take into account when they make their stories, to consider the research theme.

The initial plan was to discuss the stories emerging from the first part online to help and guide them to choose a topic for a in-depth story. The online dicussion and a new set of questions were imagined to guide the co-researchers' storytelling to relate their personal experiences to a larger socio-cultural context, them as Faroese people in Denmark and how they saw this intererrelation in their lived experiences. The questions were aimed to trigger the thought process and not as something to be answered.

Some co-researchers, this plan helped into an inquiry made by themselves. With some, this "imagined plan" did not work that well, so with them we entwined the discussions regarding the first task into a longer part 3 discussion session instead.

2. *A Finalised, In-Depth Story*

The second task was to dig deeper in their chosen theme in an in-depth story. This story emerged from the part 1 story and from the online discussion on those stories, which aim was to guide the co-researchers to choose a theme or a topic for this in-depth story. For this in-depth story they could use an artistic approach of their choice. Something they felt comfortable in using to tell their stories with.

3. *Discussion of the Finalised Story, the Interpretation and the Meaning They Want to Convey with the Story (the Discussion Session)*

The third part of the storytelling process was a discussion session where we discussed the co-researcher's part 2 story (the finalised, in-depth story) and what they wanted to convey and express with this story. In our daily communication this was called "the artwork" even if I did not ask them to make "art" but to tell a story using an artistic approach/expressive form.

Example 1. Saga's photos for task part 1.

Saga Kapna, Part 1: My Story (collage, 13 photos). The next page show her joint texts to the photos.

The slide presentation also tried to elaborate and to explain that this is an art-based research and that through telling stories using different artistic approaches, we learn and find out about their lived experiences and gain insights about those. It is an attempt to tell stories together, instead of me interviewing them and telling their stories for them.

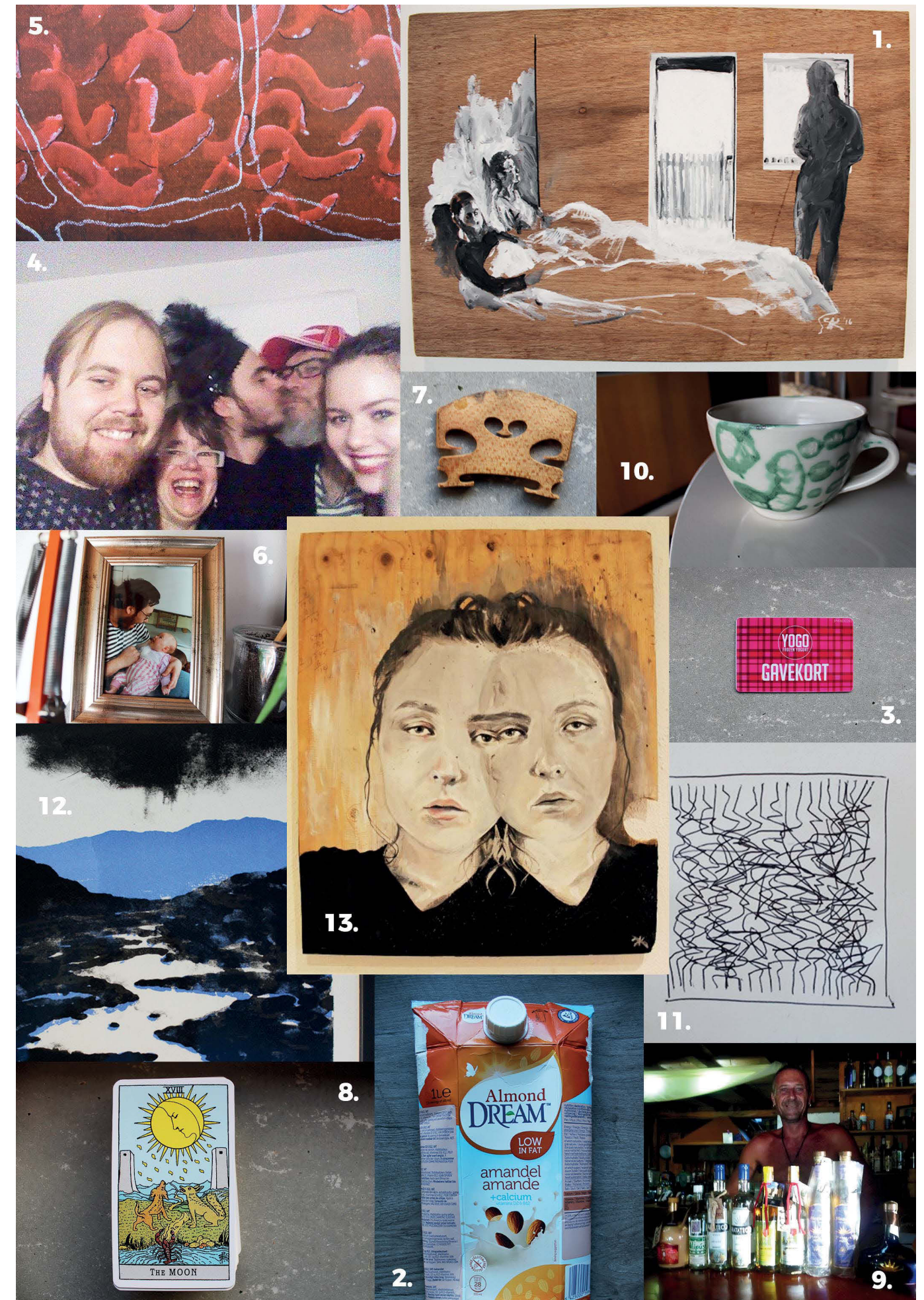
I added two sets of questions to spark a thought process and to help them to start with the practical tasks, first to trigger part 1 story and then further, to work with the part 2 in-depth story. The questions were not to be answered but rather to trigger an idea for a story of their own as Faroese people living in Denmark. As mentioned earlier, this plan was drafted so that we could start the collaboration from a distance, not to control how the co-researchers should tell the stories.

This is the first set of questions:

- The philosophical part touches upon notions of what is Faroese, what is not Faroese, and what is neither, in your experience and knowledge? It is not supposed to be about one truth, description or trying to find any fixed answers. The story is a web of different experiences, knowledges, feelings, insights and world views.
- One of my friends told me that according to how he sees it, the Faroese people have a different “mindset” (than the Danish). What is this “mindset” constructed of? How do you see the Faroese as a community, as a people, as a society, as a nation – and you amongst these notions – in your knowledge and experience (through your stories)? We will hopefully touch upon these questions during the investigation.
- What makes you Faroese, not Faroese, or neither – and what makes you experience that you belong(ed) in Denmark (or that you do not/did not belong)? And foremost, can these experiences and feelings (your stories) be told in a creative and expressive way (through art making)?

I describe the collaborative research as an exploration into something we do not know and that we are to learn together through this process I suggest for them.

Next, I show Saga's part 1 “Story of Me” photos and the accompanying texts as an example. I also elaborate on the online discussion we had about this task and about her micro-stories. Saga, Fríði and Bjartur sent me the task part 1 before we meet for the face-to-face discussions and therefore they also created their in-depth stories, which we then talk about during the face-to-face discussion session. For the others, the story-telling process went a different path and evolved into an a bit more elaborate process. These I describe in the section of the individual storytelling processes where the discussion sessions are an intrinsic part.



Example 2. Saga’s texts for task part 1.

(1) **22. dec:** The first painting from my four works in Ólavsøkuframsýningin 2016, illustrating the days after the death of my father. This one depicts Theodor and mamma laying in the bed in Velbastað, and Mattias looking out of the white window. I don’t like looking at these works, and I didn’t enjoy creating them, but at the same time they were too important not to paint. I didn’t paint anything for at least half a year after making these pieces.

(2) **Almond milk:** Since moving to Denmark in 2013, I didn’t really drink milk for about a year, resulting in lactose intolerance. This would probably not have happened had I stayed on the islands, since I probably would have kept drinking milk on regular intervals. I would also not have become vegetarian, which has happened since moving to Denmark. (I won’t keep this exact carton until you come to photo document, but there will probably definitely be some other alternative milk by then)

(3) **Frozen yoghurt:** A gift from a friend over three years ago, given in the hope of us going out and sharing a cold treat. I dislike frozen yoghurt, but haven’t been able to give it away or throw it out. So I will probably have to keep it – and the bad conscience of not wanting to use it – for a while still

(4) **New Year 2015:** A great memory, and probably my favorite family photo

(5) **Nøkur fá fet aftrat:** A part of the vinyl cover of Kári Sverrissons and Bendar Spónirs album, my favorite Tutl release so far. The cover artwork is by Rannvá Holm Mortensen

(6) **Old photo:** Me and my father wearing stripes. I can scan it in, if you want it without the frame

(7) **Spare viola bridge:** Found either on a random shelf in Velbastað or in my father’s viola case, I don’t remember exactly. I found it at a time when I felt very lost and needed something to hold on to

(8) **The Moon:** My favorite tarot card from the deck. Since moving to Denmark, it’s been difficult to connect with nature, since it’s a lot less invasive here than on the islands. So I’ve started to pay close attention to the waxing and waning moon, and the effect it has on my energy and the people around me. It’s weird, because it does have an effect on you, but you only notice if you choose to pay attention. I have to work for it to feel connected to nature. Something that happens by itself at home. Weirdly it’s also a lot more difficult to paint in Denmark, probably because of the same thing.

(9) **The legendary mezcal salesman:** A great memory from Oaxaca, southern Mexico. This guy made us taste every kind of mezcal before I bought a bottle, and apparently – if I remember correctly – he had done something very illegal in the states and had ‘disappeared’ to Mexico, and now owns a bar there

(10) **The Cup:** My favorite. My mother commissioned it from Guðrið Poulsen a few years ago to make for my father. He loved drinking from big cups. She made two, and I keep one in Velbastað (which I forgot to take a picture of, it looks quite different than this one.) The cup is in my home in Aarhus. Whenever we have parties in my collective I hide it in a cupboard, so no one will break it by accident

(11) **My head sometimes:** I woke up in the middle of the night and drew this about a year ago

(12) **Marius Olsen:** My first art print

(13) **Sjálvsmynd:** I don’t know what my thoughts are on this one really

Example 3. Short Description on our Online Discussion on Saga’s task part 1.

Saga sent her part 1 task as I suggested in the initial plan. I had some questions and thoughts on her separate micro-stories. For the discussion we used a shared Google Drive Document. She replied to my questions and elaborated on her thoughts on the stories and what she wanted to convey with the different photos and the joint texts.

The aim of this online discussion was to talk about the stories the questions sparked her to create. As an example, I wrote about her micro-story **The Moon** the following comments and questions:

Eija:

In **The Moon** you also use a symbol to tell about the need of a connection to the nature. You tell about how it is more invasive (less invasive) in Denmark. The connection to nature was lost in Denmark (which is something that happens in FO, you live it, embody it) and regained through a different way, paying attention to something, a natural phenomena, that was available in Denmark (the waxing and waning of the moon). You also compare this disconnection to the difficulty of being expressive in Denmark (being able to paint).

I find this story very, very interesting. I have a “feeling” and wish myself to understand more how all the senses and things and places we feel through our body and senses are a huge part of our being. Hence my interest in “the sense of belonging and displacement” – how it feels in our minds but also in the body. What feels different and “wrong” or “right”, “home” or “not”.

Do you think this could be something to look deeper into? Just a suggestion.

Saga:

Very possible! This is also something I’m very interested in. The whole atmospheric change and which profound influence it might have on being creative. Not sure how I would go into it, but it’s an interesting phenomena...

We did this for all of the photos/texts and in this discussion my aim was to guide her into pondering about the topics that she shared with me, and, further to guide her to select a topic or a theme to look deeper into the task part 2. The aim was not that I decide what they look into, but that they choose the topics and themes themselves. In retrospect, I think this specific part sparked her into thinking about her upcoming topic for her in-depth story.

The Storytelling Process in Practice

The co-researchers and me, the artist-researcher, worked through the 3-part-storytelling process which included two separate “tasks” of storytelling through which they used different expressive forms or artistic approaches for their stories. In the first task they told their “story” by using 10-15 visual images and short joint texts. This task created a set of “micro-stories” that tell a larger story, as all of the co-researchers told separate stories with each photograph and text. No one attempted to create a coherent linear story. These sets of “micro-stories” were planned to be discussed online and I planned to guide them through a discussion during which they choose a themes or a topic they wanted to make a more in-depth-story of. This plan worked for some co-researchers and we discussed in a written discussion online what they wanted to choose to look deeper into. For some co-researchers this method was not working and they choose to tell about their photos during the face-to-face part 3 discussion session instead which made the storytelling process even more elaborate, rich and overwhelming because of the amount of stories and themes that emerged. As the material is very rich I focus to present the themes and threads from the storytelling process that lead towards the co-researchers’ in-depth-stories, the finalised story, or “the artwork” as we started to call it.

As the co-researchers lived both in Denmark and on the Faroe Islands, I made this plan in the attempt to guide them from a distance. With some it worked and with others there was a need for a more dialogic approach. I traveled to both countries to meet the co-researchers for the part 3 discussion sessions.

About the Discussion Sessions: the Initial Plan

In the discussion sessions the co-researchers presented the finalised story they created, told me what they wanted to convey with the story as well as what the possible interpretations can be. During the discussion sessions we also negotiated what material I can use and what can be published. Their agency over the produced “artworks” and the co-created knowledge that emerged through these stories and our discussions are the core of this inquiry and for me their consent on what can be published is important. I take the ethical approach very seriously and also told them about my aims and concerns as it has to be remembered that the material created is used in academic research and hence, once published, is no longer in our control.

The discussion sessions were individual meetings between me, the facilitating artist-researcher, and each of the co-researchers. This inquiry is not conducted as a group or a community process, even if there was a possibility for that proposed in the initial invitation and plan. I base this choice on the wishes of the co-researchers as they prefer to work as pairs with me instead of as a group. I respected their wishes even if that might seem unethical for some. For me it is unethical to create

“a community” or “a collaborative, group voice” by force if the participants do not want to engage in a collaboration devised as “a community”. Another reason for this choice is the attempt to create a setting that initiates trust and encourages the co-researchers to share stories and to have a dialogue in an intimate session in a comfortable and trustful setting as is suggested by Rose (2013) when she discusses (photo) elicitation methods. This choice of working in pairs is indeed very trusting and intimate, up to a point where I needed to be very ethical and protect the co-researchers as well as such deep, personal and intimate experiences were shared with me. I am both honored and vary of my responsibility so that I do not end up exploiting the trust I have been granted or to make them vulnerable.

The Discussion Sessions Evolving

According to the initial plan, I tried to engage the co-researchers to make the part 1 task, have an online discussion with them so they can create an in-depth story which we then talked about in the part 3 discussion sessions face-to-face. This attempt to conduct an online discussion and to guide the co-researcher that way into their part 2 in-depth stories worked with some of the co-researchers. With them we discussed their finalised stories in the part 3 discussion sessions. Those sessions lasted around an hour or an hour and a half. I recorded audio notes from the sessions which I transcribed and use parts from it to describe the co-researchers’ individual storytelling processes.

With some co-researchers it did now work along the initial plan, as they wanted to also tell about the part 1 task and about their photos in the part 3 face-to-face discussion session. Through this, the discussion sessions in these cases evolved more into a face-to-face workshop session, into an overwhelming photo elicitation session, which lasted for hours and during which they told about the photos they chose for the first part story. After they told me about their photos we worked with the initially planned “online-discussion” live during which they choose what theme or topic they want to work with further in their part 2 in-depth story. In these cases, we also discussed their ideas on what this in-depth story is conveying. We agreed that they also write a short description, a diary log, if possible, of their in-depth story to accompany the finalised story.

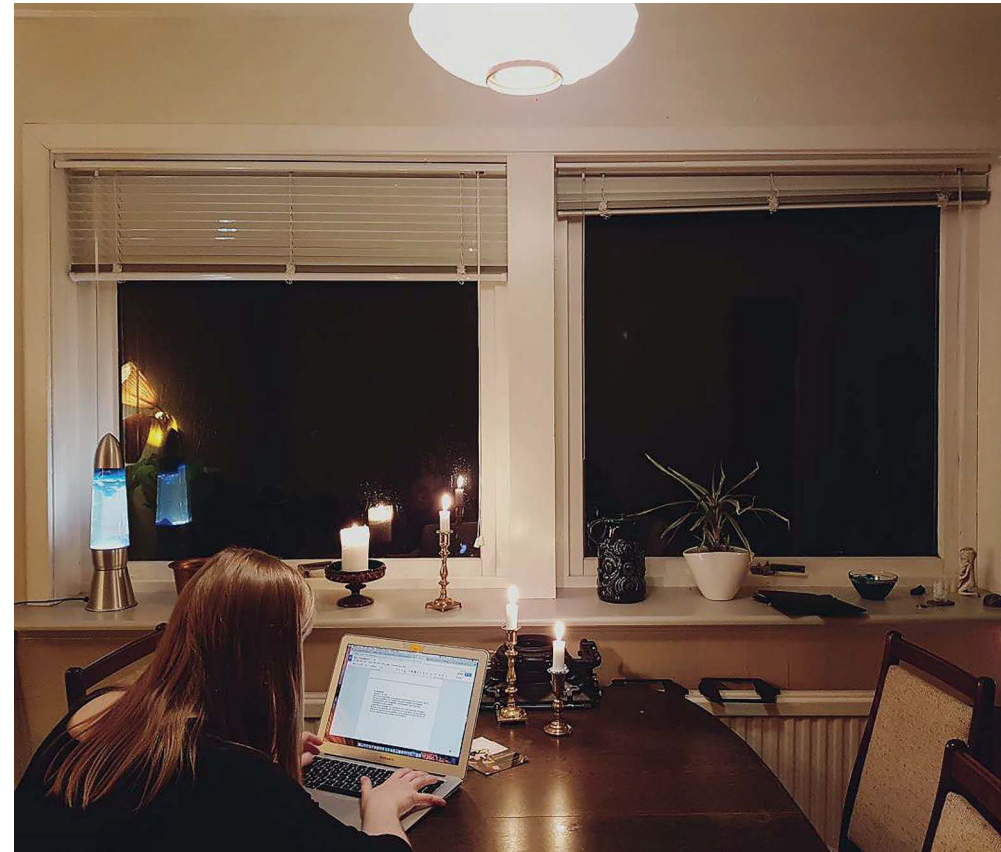
When the discussion session evolved into a workshop/in-depth photo elicitation (Rose, 2013), the initial idea for the storytelling process changed and became even more dialogic and far more elaborate than expected. With this I mean that in these cases my involvement in the decisions of what they want to work deeper with increased and that was not my aim. My aim was to guide gently through questions as inspiration, but not by taking part in their decisions on what to look into deeper. When the photo elicitation became hours long, it created even more micro-stories and threads to follow, to look into. Hence, also the recorded audio

notes are hours long and hard to transcribe or narrate within the scope of this thesis inquiry. This made the material emerging from the storytelling very rich and quite overwhelming. With this I refer to the amount of stories I have to re-tell if all are to be taken into account. With this plethora of stories is impossible to give credit to all of them. Therefore, some stories had to be excluded. I present the co-researchers' individual storytelling processes and the finalised stories, "the artworks" as well as what they wanted to convey with them in the next section in more detail.

About the Importance of the Discussion Sessions

During the discussion session a polyphonic, dialogic interpretation (Leavy, 2009) of the co-researchers' finalised stories emerged. In some sessions, we wandered into such depths, discussing very detailed aspects touching upon for example the Faroese sense of time, the Faroese weather and nature, Faroese food, the different national symbols and the differences in what is considered to be "Faroese" and what is more "Danish". It was emphasised how important these discussion sessions were, not only to discuss the outcomes, but also to guide them in their storytelling process. Co-researcher Mai described the research inquiry as "a hard project" – and I agree with her, that it's a "hard project" as well as it is "hard to define the outcome, how it's shaped". With this she means her difficulty in finding the focus for her in-depth story. Where to begin and what to choose, as there is no possibility of telling it all or to fix anything as one, coherent narrative. This we learned and agreed upon. I discuss this aspect more closely in the chapter on her individual storytelling process.

Even if I tried to be as specific and clear as possible when guiding the co-researchers, often it was unclear to the co-researchers what I meant or was asking of the co-researchers. Hence, I am critical, urge for more clarity, guidance and awareness in future dialogic collaborations, as well as to include several face-to-face sessions in a storytelling process like this one. This was unfortunately not possible within the scope of this thesis inquiry.



Visiting Mariann on Nólsoy for the part 3 discussion sessions in February 2018. She works on the texts for her photos before she presents them for me.

The Individual Storytelling Processes and the Stories

In this section I present each co-researchers' individual storytelling processes that culminate in the co-researchers' finalised stories, "the artworks", as we ended up calling the part 2 in-depth stories they created. An important part of the storytelling process were the individual face-to-face discussion session between the co-researcher and me, the facilitating artist-researcher. I narrate the parts of these discussion sessions that has a relevance to the co-researchers' finalised stories. Some of the sessions lasted for hours, touched upon other topics and intimate details which are not presented here, both due to the intimate nature of the topics and to the sheer complexity of the themes and topics discussed. There simply was not enough time to process all the varying details emerging from the co-researchers' storytelling processes and from the discussions. Interpretations for the co-researchers' finalised stories emerged during the discussion sessions in dialogue with me, the artist-researcher. Foremost, the co-researchers interpreted their own stories, conveyed their meanings also in literal or spoken form.

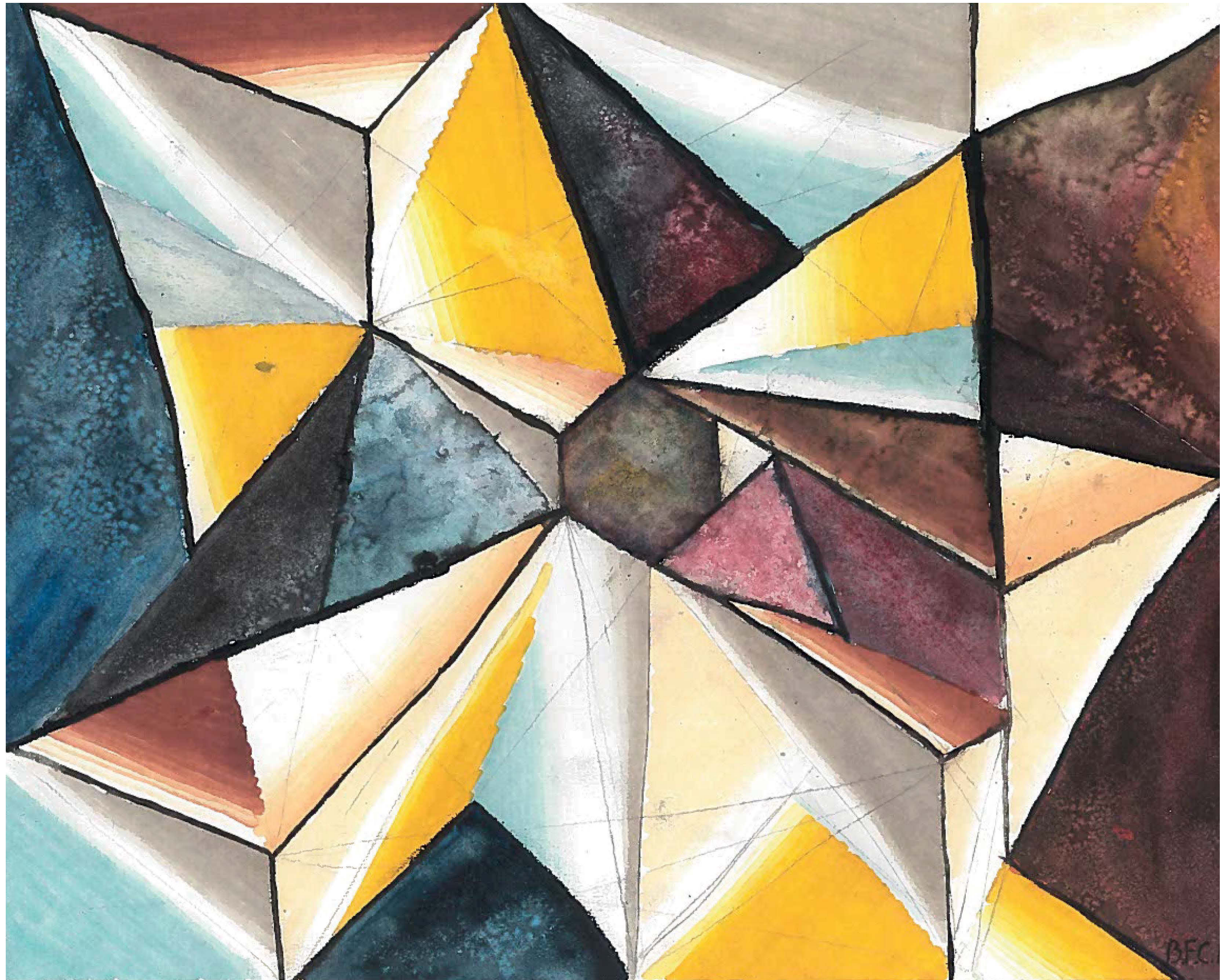
The presentations take the following pattern:

- First, the finalised story, "the artwork" (story part 2), is presented.
- I narrate a short description of our meetings, the face-to-face discussion sessions, which took place in the Faroe Islands and in Denmark. This description summarises the co-researcher's individual storytelling process and the main topics or themes in their storytelling, as well as the discussion on the finalised story, "the artwork", and its possible interpretations and meaning(s) (who, what, where).
- As each co-researcher's storytelling process is different, I tried to portray the description an evocative tone, where I account for the communication between us, how they speak and what major themes they shared with me. Some of the dialogues were more mutual and with some I listened more to the co-researcher.
- I used some direct quotes as insights or translated the dialogic tone into the narrative.
- I accounted for an internal dialogue, the internal, ethical critic, who is speaking when I re-lived and transcribed the audio recordings from the discussion sessions. These are marked in italics and within parenthesis.
- For some presentations, I added some micro-stories (texts and photos) which illustrate the storytelling path towards the in-depth story, which entangles different or multiple insights, themes or topics, to visualise how different experiences are entwined in the finalised story, "the artwork".
- There is a short biographic profile of the co-researcher (profile is devised by Mai and each decide what information to share) and a collaborative selfie, taken after the discussion sessions.

IN DENMARK



Bjartur's Storytelling



Bjartur Fríði Clementsen: Dimensions of Thoughts and Feelings, 2018

Bjartur Fríði Clementsen finalised his storytelling with a mixed media painting. He named his work *Dimensions of Thoughts and Feelings*.

(Bjartur lives in Copenhagen, where he studies architecture. He is also working on his thesis, so I have been blessed that he wanted to share some of his time as a co-researcher in my thesis inquiry as well. We arranged for a meeting at his apartment at Øresundskollegiet in Amager East in February 2018. It is the student housing block where a large Faroese diaspora of students live. I am familiar with the surroundings as I have visited other Faroese friends there, but also lived there for a short while with another Faroese friends during my exchange studies in Copenhagen. I arrived walking as I lived nearby in an Airbnb room a few blocks away. This is the neighbourhood that I am most familiar with in Copenhagen as I lived there for 5 months and have visited several times. I snapped a photo of one of the buildings, as they are majestic in their own way.)

Bjartur has been working systematically as he seems to benefit from the “plan for the storytelling”. He was the first to create the finalised, in-depth story, “the artwork”. He also has a log of his thought process where he visualised this process with different sketches for the mixed media painting. He started explaining his finalised story by first showing these sketches and then continued describing the actual painting. This will be presented as a dialogue through some transcribed parts of our conversation.

The Sketching Process: Transcribed Dialogue 1 – Speaking are Bjartur and Eija

“Out of the stories we made with the photos, it opened up for me, since the new path, or the new questions, which lead me a bit further on, maybe, because it’s about being a Faroese person in Denmark, or for me it is. For me now the core of the issue is missing home and my responsibilities as a father here in Denmark. So, what I’m trying to do is to make some kind of split, a split personality or two dimensions of what I am, I want or what I imagine. For instance, in this one (*the first sketch*) just showing the Faroese landscape and Faroese buildings, and the Danish context, the bikes and building with windows. It proceeds (*the second sketch*) on like if it was internal, like you are inside in Denmark, like in a courtyard or something, and here you have the island, sea and the house. These were the first sketches. Then I thought, maybe this is too concrete. It’s so complicated, because there are so many aspects.”

(*The third sketch*) Sorry it’s messy (*That’s fine, it’s your process*), this is both a test, a process and a tree. A very geometric tree, somehow. That’s the style I also like to do. (*Geometrical, I ask.*) Yeah, I like that. So, some of it’s pure intuition. With this I thought, a tree, as you start something, what you do, is what it becomes. It’s like the stories from the Bible, how you plant is how you – grow, well, it’s not directly translated. It’s something about that. And a strong symbol, the tree. That was not 100% either what I was after. Because I’m not after what I do, but more after what I’m searching to go in the future. (*The fourth sketch*) In this I thought it could be



many paths, and it was complicated, because it’s many paths and many spaces, and everything comes in to a core issue, about me missing home, and the kids here, and with the context that I can’t go with the kids home. Move home when I graduate, for instance.”

The Painting: Transcribed Dialogue 2 – Bjartur and Eija

“Then it’s the finished product of many dimensions – of possibilities and maybe some scenarios of the different choices, if I had made them, how they could look like or how they look like in a parallel universe, or something, so it’s like windows or some openings to other situations, and it’s blue here, as the Faroese and the red as the Danish. So, this is the core problem again, as a tesseract. The tesseract is actually there but it kind of disappeared. A tesseract is a cube within a cube. (*So, it’s kind of a geometrical term, I ask.*) Yeah. (*Ok, I say.*) And I asked my kids actually, what they imagined this to be and they imagined it to be mirrors – so it could also be a very interesting turn of it – it could be mirrors, or some reflections because all the choices we make are reflections of what we have experienced and what we want to achieve. That, most of the choices we make. This could be some of the mirrors trying to reflect on different choices (*he points at one part of the painting*) and the yellow, colour of happy thoughts. This could be a bit sadder thoughts (*he points at another part of the painting*) but in the end it all shows different landscapes. Summer, winter – it’s almost cosmic – it’s different solutions for different aspects. If I move home, then I miss my kids, and if I am staying here, I still may think I’m

belonging at home, but in the other end we are good adaptors to our context. So, yeah... this artwork is actually about taking a choice, very shortly. *(I ask, if he feels torn between the two places.)* Yeah, hmmm, torn... It's not that I don't feel I belong here, I feel good here. But there are just some things at home that I miss. Like the mountains, the nature. And my family at home. But the people here are nice. But, yeah, as I said, the nature. I think sometimes it's quite depressing to just to see a facade out of the window. But in the other hand, I think it would also drive me insane, if I where away from my kids all the time, just seeing them once a month, or every second week, or on the weekends. *(So, it's also about family, I ask.)* Yeah, it's about the family and the responsibility. My attachment to my kids. The painting, it's not a map of something that exist, it's more like a spiritual map of coordinates to come. Or a space with different dimensions, with different portals ... so it does not exist on only one plane.

For some time, we engage in a conversation about his upcoming thesis. I start a conversation about the painting again, influenced by the beautiful sketches, architectural illustrations and plans, as this is a dimension he uses also in his painting. His architectural background and knowledge through his studies, "his art", form his artist approach also within this collaboration.

The Painting: Transcribed Dialogue 3 – Bjartur and Eija

(It's interesting you went into abstract form). Yes, I was kind a surprised myself, if I should be totally honest. *(This is why I think this process in your diary/log is interesting.)* It's my style through art – I do not consider myself a professional artist, I consider myself more like an amateur artist. Of course, in architecture I become a professional architect. And architecture is art, but you know... these two painting back there *(he refers to two paintings depicting views from the Faroe Islands which he has painted)* – they are some of my works, what I've done. Ravens flying around the moon, a mountain, and the moon is on top of the mountain. *(I see a full moon. Do you miss the full moon, do you see it also here.)* I do. It's more the landscape, the nature I miss. The sky is beautiful here, I think. It's different in the Faroe Islands. But it's more the landscape. *(Is the landscape here in the colours in the painting, I ask. And the red brick buildings?)* Yeah, it could be. For instance. *(I do not know. That is what I see, at least here in Amager, those red brick buildings, I ask.)* Yeah, it has these colours... you have the water here. *(Yes, deep blue sea.)* And here it is split, here blue and red.

(I ask him if he thinks he would have come to the painting and thoughts about it without this storytelling process, looking a little deeper into your stories.) Not necessarily, no. They have some of the feelings or emotions, but I'm not describing my emotions with those paintings I made from the Faroe Islands. I'm describing how I feel about the area and it's kind of concrete – while this is a mapping or some kind of a special illustration of my emotions and how that emotion look like. And that is some kind of a picturing of it. There are some dark spots, there are some bright spots, and there are some scenarios I imagine. And in the middle is the whole chaos of everything at once. *(It's kind of a chaos you handle, in a way, it's pieces of you, everything is a piece of you, I comment. And as you said, choices that are not done yet – everything is part of you, in a way it's a prism, it's not flat, there are shapes popping up).*

Yes, they are a bit like my models up there. *(He refers to the architectural, geometrical models he has up on his shelf. I ask what they are, and he says it is some assignments he made for school.)* They actually look like the painting. *(I ask if it's moving or flowing.)* The lines are static, but the image is moving. There are some thing happening in the images. But the blue colour stays in the blue area and the red colour in the red area. *(They do not mix, I ask.)* No, because that is a split personality, or this is Denmark, and this is Faroe islands. *(Aaah, you want to keep order, I ask. So, it's a split, it is not merging into each other, I ask. He sighs, and says.)* No, because even here they are kind of separate but in the middle, it tries to merge them. Jah, it has an ambition to merge it. Jah, it tries to keep separate, because there are two different worlds. And you can't compare Faroe Islands to Denmark and Denmark to Faroe Islands. You can't compare in that way. Yeah, I see them – the people, yeah, the people, they are also, I think... *(tries to find words)* – they are all nice people but of course, you could argue, if a Danish person is more angry in person. In the other hand, they are much more loyal, like, if they promise something they keep it. Not like the Faroese, like, aaa, jaa, 2 hours late, I have to eat some bread first, you know it's like, ah... everything is... time goes slower, you could say – it's just like everything just ... *(makes slow ticking sounds)* – but when you enjoy it, it goes *(snaps his fingers)* straight away, anyway...

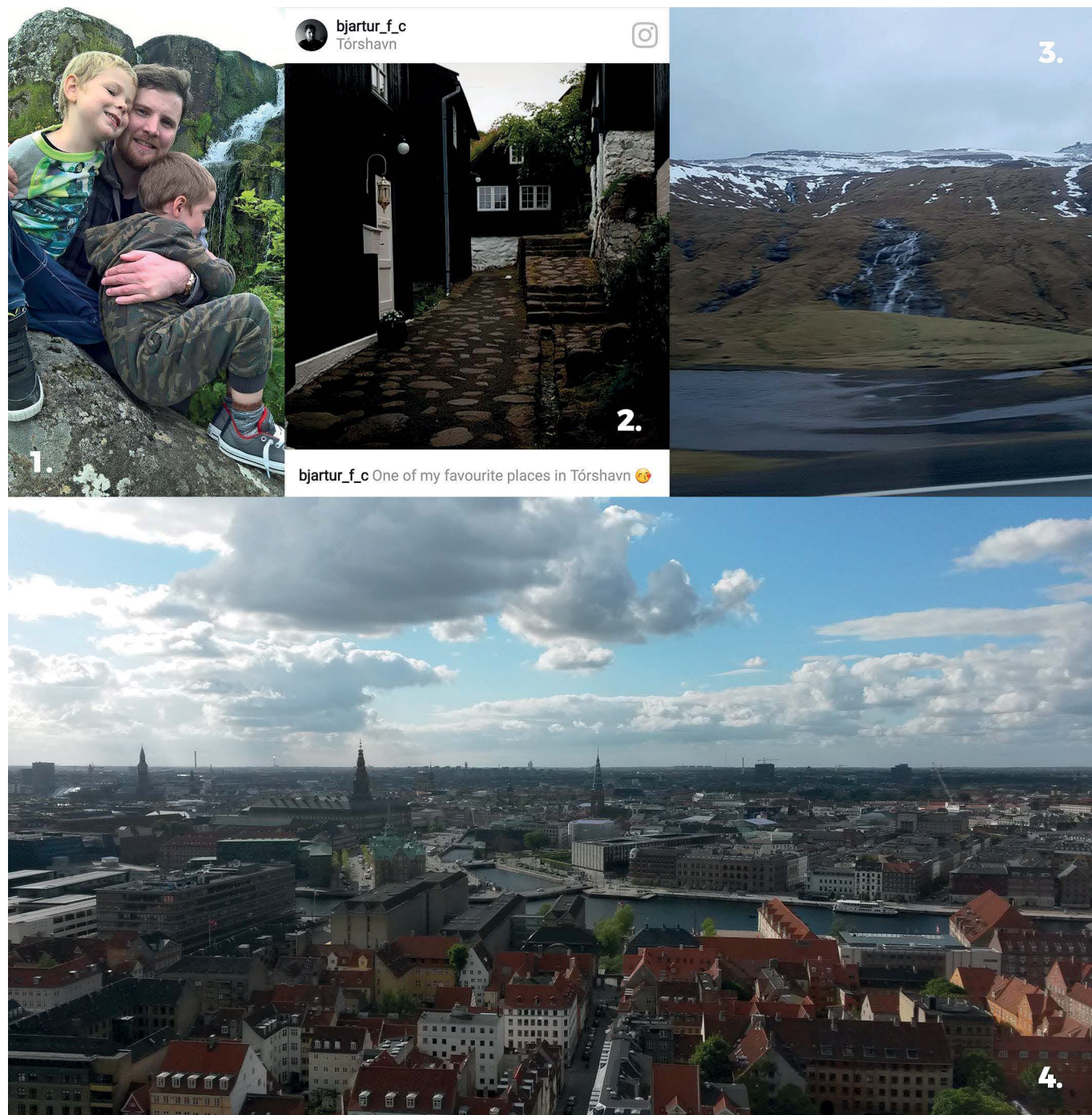
The Painting Process Narrated: Transcribed Dialogue 4 – Bjartur and Eija

Of course, there is much more, and of course, it's just one perspective. Of course, in this present time when I did it. Only one topic. This is one topic, this is about me as a Faroese person living in Denmark.

Of course, some of it is done by improvising, like, you do whatever, you have an idea, like the sketches and stuff, but some of it's also just done by your own mind or whatever, you know, it's just not mathematics, it's also psychology, and other things...

So, some of these colours are blended like, heyy, maybe ... it looked good like... ahhh, you have these lines here, *(experimentation, I ask)* and jah, you have this triangle here, it's a different colour than the rest them here, ahhh, there's another colour... ahhh, this could be a horizon... a whole planet here... or something. No, yeah, here it could be under water landscape and ooh, I could put some more blue here... more powerful colour, jah, this could be out in space as well, now different area, like more blue and stuff, and now you are also in the sea, here a night sky, you know. You have different... yes, this reminds me of, they have his works at SMS, Trondur Patursson, he made this huge column of glass and the roof top, I don't know if it's still there, but the top was painted with some glass colours, and this blue colour actually looks like it, and I talk about skerpikjót with this colour, because it's red *(we are laughing, it is a very warm intimate feeling of sharing, and it is nice to see him so exited talking about the process, the semi-unconscious-experimentation-which-leads-from-sign-to-sign-thought-to-thought-issue-to-issue, like flashing fast images flickering...)* So many things, ooohhh, skerpikjót, my goood. I miss that colour, I miss that meat. *(Skerpikjót is wind dried mutton, a Faroese traditional delicacy.)*

(Parts of the discussion is described here, the parts that are resonating in his finalised in-depth story.)



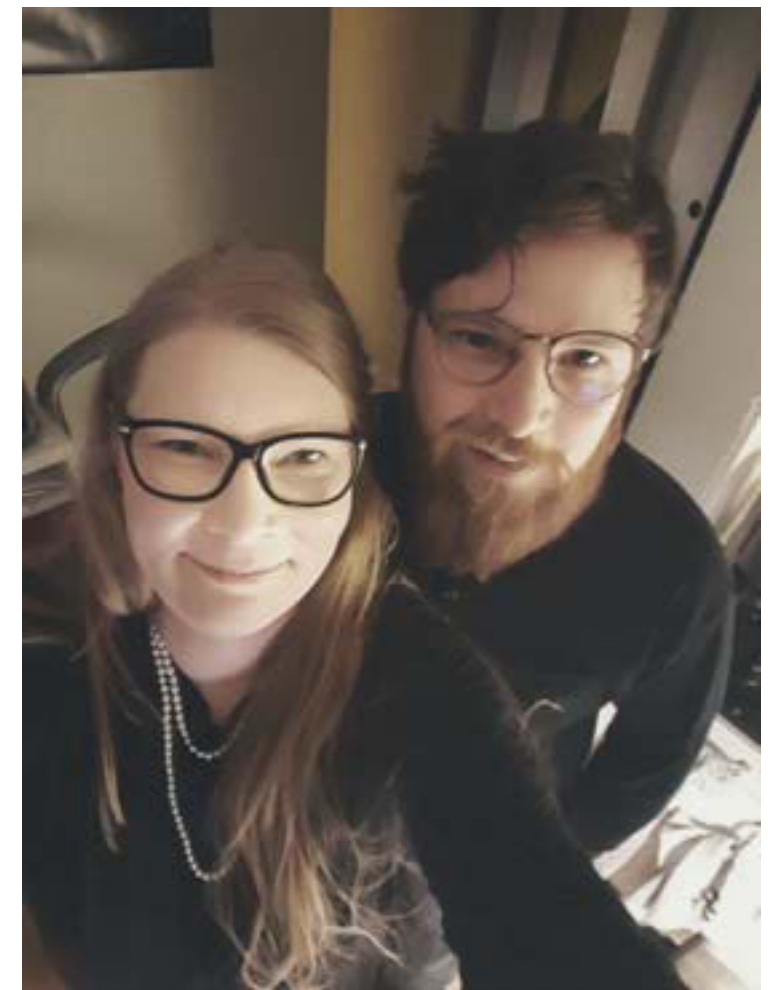
(1) **Eg og børnini (Me and the kids)** We do live in Denmark, but are visiting the Faroe Islands in every summer, and every second Easter and Christmas.

(2) **One of my favourite places** One of the old places in Torshavn called Undir Ryggi, are with the materiality, density and time one of my absolute favourite places in Faroe Islands.

(3) **The Faroese nature** 1. On the road home for Xmas vacation. The nature is first element I have contact with, when I arrive to the Faroes. It makes you miss it when you leave it.

(4) **In Copenhagen** I moved to Copenhagen to study, with the thought to move back home after I graduate. Copenhagen is also a beautiful city in its own way, however not like home.

Micro-stories from Bjartur's part 1 story, 02.2018. These are some themes or elements he merged into his finalised story.



Co-Researcher Profile

Name Bjartur Fríði Clementsen

From Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Lives in Copenhagen, Denmark

Age (31) 1986

Moved to Denmark (2011)

Went to Denmark to study architectural technology and construction management, in order to be applied for the architecture studies.

Children (7/7 Single parent of 2)

Fríðrik 7 years , Sigurð 5 years

Education Carpentry, Building technician, Pro BA in architectural technology and construction management, BA in architecture, MA in architecture (graduating in this summer)

Work Searching

Family Mother, father & brother live in the Faroe Islands. I have some cousins living in Denmark.

(Co-researchers Bjartur & Eija, Copenhagen, February, 2018)

Mai’s Storytelling

My Ocean

A video from the parking lot outside the builing where I live in Denmark.
If I open my bedroom window, it sounds like the ocean, in my mind, it is my ocean.
It sounds just like the river outside my grandparents house in Sandavági.

The urge for making this started with the image my grandfather took, through the porthole of a ship. “The sea and the mountains” – half and half. The nature I originate from, all cuddled up in the porthole, as a symbol of the round womb. The missing father representing the lack of completeness in the circle.

There is generally a big difference in anyone’s life, between growing up and adulthood. Mine has been very divided, as I moved to Denmark at the age of 19, spending my entire time growing up, here in Denmark.

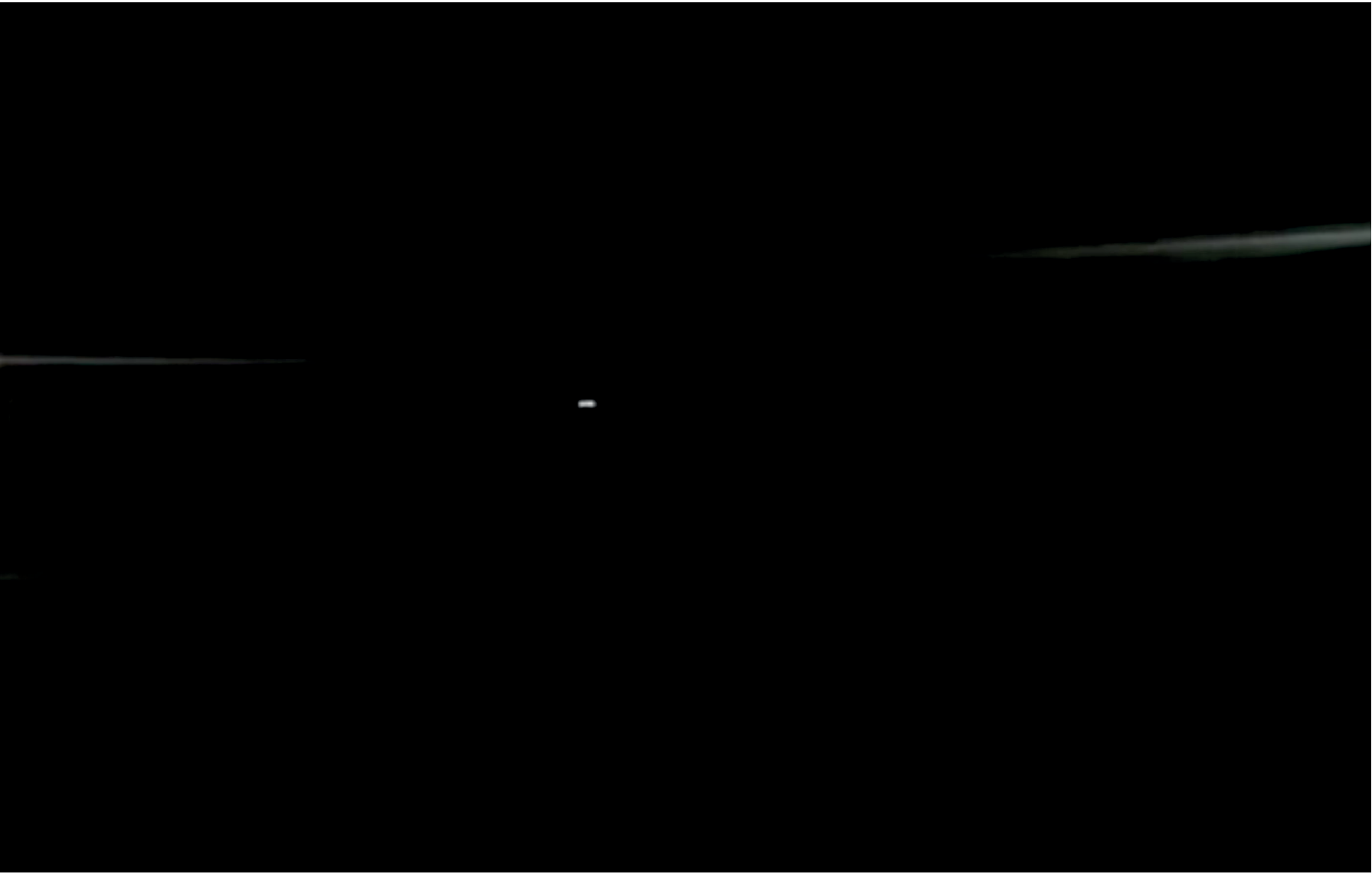
Honestly speaking, lacking my family and friends from the Faroe Islands has been quite lonely. As a single mother, alone in a ghetto in Denmark, it often felt really lonely. The view of bars around the staircase and watching the systematically placed trees along the roads rather transformed these into prison bars, more than orderly designed spaces for living.

The feeling was emphasized with my really bad timing, versus the really well organized Danish fellow students. A way of unwillingly standing out.

The lighting of the video is dark, to make the recipient focus on the sound – the sound of my Ocean. The passing of cars is visual with their lights, but the sound of them also has a kind of random flow about it – just like waves would have, listening to the ocean.

The two vertical light-beams from the lamp posts add levels to the picture, as to symbolize the same division of mountains and sea, as in the picture from my grandfather. In this video though, all the lines are flat, straight and very “boxy”, to show the contrast of the feeling of the sound vs. the feeling of the seen / reality.

For me, this is the image of freedom. What you watch and what you see can be very different. To me, the trees represent bars and the parking space is empty. But nobody can take the sound of the ocean out of my head.



Mai Jacobsen: Ocean, video, duration 1:09, 2018.
Mai wrote also a description of the video which is presented above.

Mai Jacobsen finalised her storytelling with a video work. She named her work *Ocean*.

(We met in February 2018 in Copenhagen, Denmark, for the discussion session. She lives in a different Danish town, Vallensbæk, and as she could meet in the late evening, Mai's cousin offered her place in Copenhagen for the discussion session. She was also there with us during the session. It was quite dark in her living room/bedroom as there was only one light and the light from my laptop screen illuminating the space – the cousin offered us coffee and Mai brought cookies for us to share. It felt intimate and cozy.)

Mai's discussion session started with her showing me photos meant for the task part 1 which is to tell about "her story" with 10-15 photos joint with some text. As she did not send them to me prior, there was no online discussion about what she wanted to work with further in her in-depth story, the task 2 story. I was not prepared for the session. I understood that she wanted to show and tell about the task part 1, about her story, in the discussion session as it is not an easy task to narrate a story about yourself in such a simplistic way. I realised that I have made an elaborate and demanding 3-part-system and acknowledge that some of the co-researchers want to do it differently than I have suggested. I was open to this, and there was a space for this because of the experimental nature of the research design. It is also an ethical choice to give an agency to the co-researcher to divert from a "planned system". I let Mai decide how to shape her storytelling process.

Mai showed me the photos which she found and re-photographed from her grandmother's archives during her previous visit to the Faroe Islands. It was five black-and-white photographs and through those photographs she elaborated on her thoughts which guided her to choose exactly those ones. The photos and the stories resonated with the questions I gave them to trigger the part 1 task, the story about herself as a Faroese person living in Denmark and what being "Faroese" means to her and what it means to her to belong. The photo elicitation was rich in detail and the themes and topics were varied and based mostly on a nostalgia of past times in the Faroe Islands, but she also elaborated on present times and topics through these old photos. Many of the stories she shared with me are memories from her village childhood in the Faroe Islands in the 1980's as well as memories and stories from past times involving her grandparents. Mai moved to Denmark in 1999. She also showed photos which embark on the Danish-Faroese relation and the Queen and on things she misses from the Faroe Islands.

All these stories she shared are impossible to account for in this thesis narrative, as it could be an investigation of its own. I realised that I will not be able to handle the richness in the co-researchers' stories, but I am grateful for all these detailed stories she shared with me during this intimate session. I focused on the micro-stories and on the discussion that sparked her idea for her in-depth story, the part 2 story.

Mai tells me after it is time to think about what she wants to dig deeper into in her storytelling and what theme(s) she wants to discuss in her finalised story, "the artwork". She utters, sounding quite frustrated:

"It is a hard project, it is hard to see how it could be shaped".

By "hard" she means the impossibility of inquiring into such a large phenomenon without further guidance from me as the facilitator. Even if I think I have made a very clear plan, the 28-paged presentation to guide their process, and even if I tried to be clear through the various discussions we have had through additional e-mails and Facebook chats about what I ask of them, I am wrong. I have asked many questions, maybe too many. One of them was about what being Faroese is to her. Mai tells that is not possibly to express what being Faroese is.

"It is difficult, there is so much essence in the Faroe Islands, and it is not expressible", she says.

I realised that I have asked a lot from my co-researchers. I tried to explain that it is not the aim to find a cohesive story, an "essence of being Faroese of the Faroe Islands", because as such it is impossible. She relaxed a bit. I tried to explain that the first part of the storytelling, the story of herself, is to be considered as something which we start from, and that it can consist of moments and situations, memories, images, her views on different aspects, like fragments instead of a linear story. The questions guiding into the task are supposed to trigger some thoughts, reactions, even a resistance. She reacted to the word fragment as I attempted to guide her further into what I asked of her.

An association to the word fragment unraveled as a story. The story is about her experiences of loneliness just right after she moved to Denmark in 1999.

"The whole togetherness thing, it has been a huge contrast for me coming to Denmark, and just being anonymous – in some way – in Herning I was really anonymous, I was just minding my own business. It was really lonely. But there are a lot of other things that played into, contributed to the loneliness. I was single mother, had a daughter, and I was alone. My mom was on the Faroe Islands, my cousin was half an hour away – that was good, but I was in a school, so I had not time to make friends, because I had to go home, pick her up and make dinner ... I was really young at that time, 24, 25 – and I remember I lived in this building, and the whole building was like – people living in big buildings, each one in their own cage. When I used to stand outside smoking, I used to think this is a god damn prison. And I have had that thought so many times, cos I am just staring into this reeling, that is there that you do not fall

down, right – so it's just iron, and the squares, all too many squares, just looking, oh my god – I'm not in prison, but I really feel imprisoned.

And I used to sit outside really late in the evening, and down at the other end, in the corner, there was this really old guy sitting smoking outside in his garden – I was like sometimes, heyyy, like that was my companion, and then he died. And it was so lonely, so all this togetherness in the Faroe Islands, maybe it is also the contrast of coming there – and this way, everybody – and then going back to this – nothing.”

Would you tap into that somehow, I ask.

“Jah. A fragment of a puzzle. Maybe the whole fragment word said something to me. It is, kinda like a missing piece, or something. I feel like the puzzle is there, and I am just lost under the bed, over here. The togetherness is good. And the loneliness of being here.”

It is a story of her feelings of loneliness and imprisonment which she experienced almost two decades ago and that she now remembers in the discussion session. In her memory she is outside of the building block she lived in at that time, she is smoking a cigarette and is watching through the iron reeling. It is a physical memory which she decided to intertwine in her finalised, in-depth story as an entanglement with the sound of the ocean from her childhood merging into the nightly landscape from outside her house in her present home in Denmark – the ocean sounds created by the freeway with cars passing by in the night – and further, entwining in it the ocean depicted in the photograph taken by her grandfather, the sailor, during one of his many journeys working on a ship. He sailed near and far, both in the Faroe Islands, but also all around the world. It is to be a video work, she said to me.

She also reminded me, when I ask her for some feedback on the interactive story online, to tell that her grandfather was a sailor. I understand that this telling underlines the importance of her connectedness and nostalgia for her childhood landscapes and the ocean. That ocean which also is a provider of the daily food that her grandfather brought home from his fishing trips. It also entwines her insight that the landscape is just not a view to dwell upon, to look at, it is something she needs to be in, to feel it with her body and senses. Like when she was a kid and when they went up the mountain just right outside her house.

(Parts of the discussion is described here, the parts that resonate in her finalised, in-depth story.)



The Sea and the Mountains.

“My grandfather took this picture, through the porthole of a ship that he worked on. This really speaks to me aesthetically and also means a lot metaphorically, as this is a picture of what I miss the most from my country: the sea and the mountains. Half and half. This is somehow also how I see this type of nature now – through the porthole of my mind or in an image.

I used to live outside practically. I walked to school every day, and after school me and my best friend would climb the mountain near our house. Whenever I was sad or angry, I would go up on the mountain and enjoy watching the houses become smaller and smaller. We would catch fish and crabs with other kids in the neighbourhood and play with whatever was there, outside.

I realize, that this is something I will never have again, not only because of my geographical location, but also because of time – things will never be that way, not even for my children, if I moved there. Times have changed. Still this is deeply rooted in my soul.”

Mai Jacobsen: A Micro-Story from her part 1 task (photo & text). She is discussing her relation to the Faroe Islands as a person living in Denmark since 1999, 02.2018. Photo on the previous page.



Co-Researcher Profile

Name Mai Jacobsen

Age 36 (1981)

From Kollafjørður, Faroe Islands

Lives in Vallensbæk, Denmark

Moved to Denmark (1999)

(Moved to Denmark because I wanted a creative education. First within music and then changed direction to clothing design.)

Children Cecilia 16 years old & Anakin 5 years old.

Partner / nationality René / Faroese

Education BA in Fashion Design

Work Self employed

Family Mother & brother live in Denmark. Also most of my father’s side of the family live in Denmark.

Partners family All live in the Faroe Islands.

(Co-researchers Mai & Eija, Copenhagen, Denmark, February, 2018)

Fríði's Storytelling

I've always known that I am awful at using my hands. I'm very clumsy and my fine motor skills are figuratively non-existent. Growing up in a, even by Faroese standards, small village of 400 people, I was surrounded by the idea that the road to becoming a man was through manual labour and an interest in sports, a road that I was not able to follow. I had asthma, was overweight, the slowest runner in the schoolyard, and as stated earlier, clumsy, so I wasn't excelling in the sports department, and the only "sport" I liked was wrestling, which isn't sport at all, and everyone knew it.

I felt like I didn't belong. I felt like people were calling me a faggot behind my back, and only a few did it to my face. (and they were half-right) I liked talking, the colour pink, and art. Just art in general. Paintings, films, plays, books, video games and especially music. I felt that no one appreciated these things in the same way that I did, and therefore couldn't understand me, you know, the typical teenage existential crisis, but it began before I even started going to school. I did not feel like I belonged.

When I got older and started having realistic plans for the future, staying in the Faroe Islands never felt like an option. I needed to go out and find myself. It turns out that I didn't have to leave the country, I just needed a driver's licence to go to more shows and connect with those who hung around those places. I started getting to know people who filled the hole I had inside me, and lead me to create more art.

My platform for expression is a band in which I sing. I use this band as a platform for aggressively pushing boundaries in the Faroe Islands. I want people to point at my band and say that "this is where it all started." I have a somewhat narcissistic drive; I don't just want this band to make it big I want it to be important. I want it to change the environment I grew up in, where I felt like I didn't belong.

I learned after finishing high school that no matter what job I might be working at when I'm a "real" adult, it's going to require an English degree. English is what I have always gotten perfect grades in, while I was on the verge of failing most of my other classes. While I might not be awful at using my other skills, I want to excel. I want to feel like I am contributing, like I am invaluable, like the world will stop if I stop. Art is one of the most important things in my life. Art is what drives me. I chose to study English because I knew it would be mostly concerned with art and aesthetic in general.

But you can't study English in the Faroe Islands, so I moved to Copenhagen to study English at Copenhagen University because that's where my guitarist lived

at the time, and we wanted to continue our work with the band. Sadly, he quickly went back home with his girlfriend and kids, as they weren't thriving here.

After finally becoming friends with people who understood me, I was now stuck in a country without any close friends. Everything was strange, and it felt like I was going to in a rough spot for the next 5 years. However, I decided that I needed to make the best out of a shitty situation and started contacting everyone I somewhat knew. I decided that I should experience everything I could for the next 5 years, and I filled my weeks up with events to attend almost every day. I invited people with me to these events on a sort of friendship date, and while I was making new friends and getting integrated into new cliques I found out that I absolutely loved this place.

I have never felt like I belonged this much. In the past 5 months I have grown immensely in such a way that I never would have in my small village of 400 people. I have become addicted to experiences and getting to know people. I have a need to grow, and I want to use this growth to change things in the Faroe Islands. Despite missing people in the Faroe Islands, Copenhagen is exactly where I need to be right now.

Do I still feel Faroese, even though I belong somewhere else? Sure, I spent the first 23 years of my life there, it will always be something that I will be identified as, but right now, I live in Copenhagen.

In the Faroe Islands I feel at home when I am in my childhood home, which I've lived in since I was 2 years old, until I was 23 years old. I feel at home whenever my parents or brothers are around, and I have access to all the things I'm familiar with. In Copenhagen I feel at home when I'm within the city's perimeter. I have no permanent residence anywhere, and I travel between apartments (2 weeks here, 4 days here, a month here).

I love both places, but my narcissistic need to be important is why I want to be a big fish in the small pond of the Faroe Islands, thus I know that I will move back to the Faroe Islands at one point, but I am not sure if it will be within the next 5 years.

Even though I feel like I am at home, I don't feel Danish. Home is whatever surroundings I'm currently living in and it could be anywhere if I am making an effort to explore the different aspects of those surroundings, because I will always find some way of fitting in.

Fríði Djurhuus finalised his storytelling with *thoughts on paper*, which are written in English.

(I met Fríði for the discussion session in February 2018 at his and his girlfriend's apartment in Copenhagen. I took the bus there, Google Maps as my companion, but despite that went too far and had to retrace some steps. It was a red brick building, up to the second floor. It was not their name on the door, as it was a temporary residence. I was greeted with a hug by both of them.)

Fríði decided to write a short story as his part 2-task. When we met, he had written the text as a hand-written note. He underlined that is it not supposed to be read out loud in its final form. Despite that, he read the draft to me. He pointed out that he still wants to refine it later into its final form. As he read the handwritten text to me, he paused in places where he felt a need to define or explain some aspects in more detail, like when he talks about his own art and thoughts on aesthetics:

"The art I am referring to in my text is literature"

Fríði preferred to write a straight forward text, something raw. He described it as:

"I lived here, this is my fifth month here, so I still have not adjusted or anything like that. Everything is still new to me. And I thought the best thing I could do was to write my thoughts down and just use that. This is my art, really unstructured... It might not say much, but this is how my brain works. This is the art I like to make. Something raw. Nothing in the sense of talking about raw stuff, but how it is done. It is supposed to be in written form, not to be read out loud."

He shared his thoughts on what he wanted to convey with his text, the thoughts on paper, with me:

"I feel at home wherever I am, here, instead of a specific place in the Faroe Islands. I thought that might be interesting. I know that I will move back to the Faroe Islands at one point. But now I'm not sure if it will be within the next 5 years. I love both places but my narcissistic need to be important is why I want to be a big fish in the small pond of the Faroe Islands, I want to make a difference back home."

And he elaborated further on his thoughts on a sense of belonging and his stay in Copenhagen:

"Home can be anywhere as long as you apply yourself. Push yourself to come in contact with people and exploit a place for every experience it has. I did it just to get by, but it lead me to love the place I am at."

I asked him: "So you are pondering the situation and your feelings of being in Copenhagen?"

"Exactly. I am still not really sure how I feel about any of this stuff, like, I know that I really love this city, like, it's my favourite place to be in the world, right now at least. And it's like I can do things here that I can never do in the Faroe Islands. Not in the next hundred years at least, I think, because we are so far behind. But in a sense, I want to do something. I want my print on the world to be meaningful. I feel it is difficult to do here because there are so much stuff going on and I feel my work would be more valuable in the Faroe Islands. It will make more of a difference. So, yeah, currently I have just been in the city, because I love it, and I am experiencing as much as I can, and hopefully I will learn something, and bring some of it back to the Faroe Islands. That is pretty much what I wanted to say with this text, but while intertwining it with the more personal stuff."

He also elaborated why he did not write a poem or something more lyrical even if he writes music and lyrics:

"I wanted to avoid that because awhile I appreciate it in art, that way of creating meaning. But when I do something that I feel is this personal, especially, if I am in a place where everything is still like in the clouds, then it would be dishonest of me to start writing a poem about it, because it is something that I don't really understand yet. To me it's more meaningful to write what I think. And then I can structure it later. I feel I need to structure this more"

His short story, the raw thoughts on paper, combine many of his micro-stories from the part 1-task, where he shared what is important to him at the moment, and how he sees his present situation as an aspiring English student in Copenhagen after a stay of 5 months. In this in-depth story he looked deeper into his relationship to Copenhagen and the Faroe Islands. He also put a strong emphasis on music making and his own metal band called Iron Lungs in both the part 1 and part 2 stories. He defined those as the "the opposing force".

(We had a short break and in midst the interview he picked up the laundry. His girlfriend was cooking in the kitchen, you heard the clinking of the pans, cutting of the vegetables and the sizzling of the food boiling.)

The second part of the discussion focused more on his music which he considers as his art, the music making, lyric writing, performing, and his life among

and within metal music. He got very excited to tell about his "own art" within the metal scene and his band Iron Lungs, which is taking a somewhat political and radical stance in their aim to create a change within the small community of metal heads in the Faroe Islands. He explains it to be a fight against prejudice and being narrow-minded. He crystallises:

"I just want people to be less judgemental as well – in my music scene."

Amongst the many talks about his music writing and being in the band, a discussion on another kind of belonging emerged, a belonging within and to a metal community. He sees that it has helped him to see beyond the boundaries of the Faroe Islands, but at the same time he was concerned and wanted to act so the local Faroese metal community "stays alive" and that it should be "as inclusive as possible".

After this insight, I stand corrected, and I am happy I have left the "sense of belonging" quite open, despite the guiding questions focusing on the situations in relation to Denmark and the Faroe Islands. A sense of belonging can be interpreted from many perspectives – and as it seems, I have presumptions as well. Even if some Faroese people I have met earlier might feel that they do not belong in Denmark because they are "not Danish" does not mean that all feel the same. Fríði's insight dissolved that presumption as he described not feeling a belonging to a specific place or an idea of a "nationennes". There is also a feeling of displacement "back home" where very defined and stereotypical roles for example what a "man is" or "how to become a man" exist. We shared a long conversation about Fríði's attempt in his own way to challenge the stereotyping and categorising of people through his own music and his band Iron Lungs. A belonging to the metal community emerged along an understanding of "a national belonging".

I asked him if the storytelling process revealed something that he was not aware of, or if it helped him to put "words on something he did not see before"?

"I think it structured my narrative, maybe easier for me to see where I am at or where I have been".

(After the session I got dinner made by Fríði's girlfriend. It was a tasty pasta with vegetables with a dash of white wine. The discussions around the table revolved around music, as that is what we have as a common ground.)

(Parts of the discussion is described here, the parts that are resonating in his finalised story.)



"This photo was taken by me at Stengade, Copenhagen. I am currently residing in Copenhagen, and have decided that I need to exploit every opportunity I have to experience things I can't at home. This photo is of the band, Stoned Jesus, who played one of my all-time favourite albums, their own album "Seven Thunders Roar", from beginning to end. I found out about this show less than a week before, and immediately bought a single ticket. Then I saw that a person from my Facebook friend list was attending the event, and decided to ask him if he wanted to meet up at the show. This person was a friend of a friend, whom I had only met twice at least a year before, but I saw this as an opportunity to get to know someone Faroese in Copenhagen, even though I probably would not have contacted him if the show was in the Faroe Islands. I think this photo represents how different it is living in Copenhagen compared to the Faroe Islands. In the Faroe Islands I would have never experienced a Ukrainian stoner metal band playing one of my favourite albums from beginning to end, but here I just found out that they played in a few days. This happens all the time, as so much happens in Copenhagen. At times I feel like this is where I am meant to live for at least the rest of my twenties."

Fríði Djurhuus: A Micro-Story from his Part 1 Story (image & text) where he discusses his relation to metal music and how he is exploring Copenhagen through an extreme metal concert, 2018



Co-Researcher Profile

Name Fríði Djurhuus

From Søldarfjørður, Faroe Islands

Lives in Hvidovre, Denmark

Age 24 years old

Moved to Denmark in (2017)

Reason I wanted to study English, which I couldn't do in the Faroe Islands. I also wanted to live in a place completely different from my town of 400 people. I also had all these plans with the guitarist of my band, who lived in the area at the time, about how we are gonna expand in Denmark.

Education BA in English in Københavns Universitet

Family With exception of three cousins and an aunt, I don't have any close relatives in Denmark. Most of my family lives in the Faroe Islands.

(Co-researchers Fríði & Eija, Copenhagen, Denmark, February, 2018)

Saga’s Storytelling

I was on the bus on my way back home from work
It was late at night, and I closed my eyes.
Tiredness took over with a gentle insistence, and somehow I found it difficult to keep
my eyes open
I opened my eyes
The bus was on its way out of Norðasta Horn – driving towards Velbastað
Going home
It was completely dark, but I felt how the bus followed the roads
The seat felt familiar, blue and white, warm polyester
But the road didn’t curve the same way as usual
I was on my way towards Aarhus with the last bus
118 via Skørping, straight ahead, but not really
Small bus stops along the way, unnecessary routes in the middle of nowhere
A young man walked into the bus – he’s probably going out tonight, I thought to
myself
He checked in on his travel card and found himself a seat
I closed my eyes
I was back on the islands
The bus was driving faster now
The road turns in a big circle towards the left, past the barn in Havnadal
On its way towards the round house that my father built
This felt almost like, you know, when you’re on your way into Aarhus, right there by the big
crossing close to Ikea in Skejby
But there’s no traffic here
Everything feels kind of the same, familiar
The sounds are the same, the radiators release the same kind of warmth
If you’re tired enough, it feels almost the same
When you close your eyes

Jeg sad på bussen på vej hjem fra arbejde
Det var sent om aftenen. Jeg lukkede øjnene.
Trætheden overtog sindet med blid kraft - og det var svært for
mig at holde mig vågen
Eg opnaði eyguni
Bussurin var á veg úr Norðastahorn - móti Velbastað
Á veg heim
Tað var heilt myrkt úti, men eg merkti, hvussu bussurin fylgdi vøgnum.
Setrið var vælkent
Blátt og hvítt, í heitum polyestri
Men vøgurin snaraði ikki sum vant.
Jeg var på vej mod Aarhus med den sidste bus
118 via Skørping, lige ud - noget af vejen,
små stoppesteder ude i ingenting, på unødvendige delruter.
En ung mand steg på bussen - han skal nok i byen, tænkte jeg
Han tjekkede ind på sit rejsekort (pla-ling) og fandt en plads
Jeg lukkede øjnene
Eg var aftur í føroyum
Bussurin koyrði skjótari nú
Vøgurin snarar í einum stórum cirkli móti vinstru-
Forbi fjósið í Havnadali - á leið móti teimum rundu húsunum, sum babba
hefur bygt
Hetta føldist næstan sum, tá man er á veg inn í Aarhus, harbeint við
stóra rondellinum við Ikea í Skejby
Men her er eingin trafikkur
Alt følist eitt sindur sum tað sama, vælkent
Bussurin hevur sama ljóð, radiatorurin hevur sama hita
Um man er nóg troyttur, følist tað næstan líka,
tá ið man letur eyguni aftur

Saga Kapna finalised her storytelling with a spoken word audio recording in Faroese and Danish. She named her work *Speech*.

(Saga lives in Aarhus and I have travelled to visit her for a few days. We have in common a music concert we were both attending during my visit as well. We conducted our discussion in her room in a huge community house where she lives together with other people. I was also enlightened by her and her roommates about a vegan lifestyle, as well as I am taken out for a dumpster diving tour in the close by neighbourhoods, the wealthy ones. I am shocked how much food that was still edible was thrown out. They never buy bread, they say, they can manage to get bread for 8 people with the bread and other bakery goods that, for example the local bakery throws out, as no one buys the bread that was baked the previous day. They are academics and artists, an interdisciplinary vegan community where Saga has settled down. Saga studies art history in the University of Aarhus. She is also a creative person, an artist, and is also trained previously in visual arts. She also sings fabulously, I found out during my visit to Aarhus.)

Discussing the Finalised Story

00:41 When I went to work, and on the way back to work I take the bus to Aarhus, and in the bus I was getting into this drowsy state. I kept closing my eyes, and opening my eyes, when you are almost falling asleep but not really – then I was sure I was on the Faroe Islands and I was taking the bus 5 to Velbastaður, I was taking the last bus in the evening. Because I was going to travel to the Faroe Islands a couple of days later, I was also mentally preparing to go home. It was this really weird thing, and I kept thinking and it felt exactly the same because you are in the bus, the bus sounds similar and it moves in a similar way, but the patterns weren't the same. The landscape was completely dark outside. That was the same, a lot of the things were the same, but slightly different. But I wasn't able to completely understand or discern how it was different, how it was the same, because I was quite drowsy. And then I thought, hmmm, that was interesting, so a couple of days later I took the last bus home to Velbastaður and I was getting really drowsy, and I was experiencing the same thing but this time I was actually there. And I kept closing my eyes, and opening my eyes, and thinking am I in Denmark experiencing that I am in the Faroe Islands, or am I actually home, so it was really this weird thing, so I wrote it down like a poem which changes between Faroese and Danish. So, I can read it up, it's a sketch, it's not done at all. That's the balance being in the Faroe Islands and being in Denmark, and then being in this generic situation, where it doesn't really matter actually, because I'm in transit. Maybe I should just read it, she asks.

03:16 *(Yes, just read it, I say.)* And she reads the poem. *(I understood almost everything, some things are lost in translation...)*

05:09 So that's the poem, that's pretty much what I did.

(I said that the poem is very expressive, and that the shifting languages are interesting, as well as the transition of languages, in opposite places. ... I ask her, if she feels that she belongs in both places, that she doesn't have a problem being here in Denmark, also feel that she belongs here. You have a connection to the Faroe Islands and miss it because of your family, but not define yourself "only Faroese", as we also discussed earlier.)

06:20 It's easier or more difficult for me, the idea of an identity related to one place, as I was never from the Faroe Islands when I was living in the Faroe Islands, so I never really had that "I am Faroese, my parents are from here, I grew up here, and this is my village". I don't have that kind of set identity, because I come from all over the place. But still, when moving to Denmark I very much said that I'm Faroese. If I would talk to another Faroese person in Denmark, I'd maybe say that I'm Faroese, but I'd be more careful because I'm not as "Faroese" as someone who is Faroese. And at the same time, it's an interesting kind of balance, because also in many ways I am starting to become more and more Danish. And it used to bother me because I'm not too fond of the Danish language for instance, and I was kind of tired that I have to learn the Danish language. But now I am getting quite good at it. I think 2 years ago I started being quite natural and I have a good Danish humor and timing now. And it's really easy for me to talk to everyone in Danish because I have mastered the language much more than I did before. And that makes it easy for me to feel Danish, but at the same time, there is all the cultural things, that I never grew up with here in Denmark. And the same thing was in the Faroe Islands, that I did not watch the same TV-shows than everyone else. I don't have this really deeply rooted "Danishness", definitely I don't have that. That's much more who I am now here in Denmark.

08:26 I think I also started to feel Faroese when I moved from the Faroe Islands. Because now I can take the good parts and I can travel home, be home for a while, be home for the summer, and take all the best parts. And then I can leave all the daily life and being bored in the long winters. I don't get that because I'm just travelling back and forth.

(A silence, as I have realised from previous sessions that I need to wait long enough, not to interrupt the thoughts of the co-researcher's as they talk.)

It's difficult to get the head on the needle.

09:20 *(It makes sense, with this poem you describe really well this transition, the flow, between the countries you experience. That you are flowing in between the both. And maybe not being defined by neither. So, it's that you are both, or? Both at the same time, but not that you can kind of separate them from each other, I ask).*

09:45 Yes, definitely. And I think the interesting part about the experience I had was that I wasn't bothered by it. I didn't have any strong feelings about it anyway, and I thought it was quite interesting. And that it was interesting that it did not bother me. I had expected to be, to have stronger opinions on myself as being from one place or the other place, but I think I just a short time ago started to accept that I'm from where ever I am at the moment. So, don't have this kind of set identity for each place I am. But also, last night in the concert it was just like being on the Faroe Islands because there are all these people speaking Faroese. And I acted like I act when I am on the Faroe Islands. And at the same time, I have some friends from Denmark and that was kind of, it's always an interesting thing seeing

like how I talk to people when I talk Faroese and when I talk Danish. Of course, you always, like I said before, you act differently depending on whom you talk to and whom you are communicating with because every kind of relationship is different. There is definitely a set way of speaking Faroese and a set way of speaking Danish. You choose to say something in Faroese and something in Danish, or you choose not to say something – for people will react differently – it's quite funny in that way.

1:02:42 (If we go back to your story, you are in transit between the both and both exist in you.) (I ask how she wants to continue with her story which initiated this discussion. I ask if she wants it to be written or spoken word. She says she wants it rather as spoken word, as she does not feel good in her Faroese in her poetry (she means the written Faroese).)

1:03:56 (So you think people will be saying that this is not correct Faroese, I ask her.) Yes, she says.

(I respond that it would be lovely if she make it as a spoken word and understand the strict rules about the written Faroese and its requirements for correctness which resonates on the struggles to revive the language as a written one after centuries of it being not allowed in the public sphere. This is yet another thread in this very rich storytelling and we could all just be dwelling in the Faroese language as Mariann is talking about. But as this inquiry is not concentrating on this aspect only, the form is free and a choice the co-researchers themselves make how they want to present their stories or "art". I also ask her if she can provide a translation in English of the poem as it is in Danish and Faroese. I say that it's interesting also to have it as a spoken word as then you can hear the differences and tonalities in these different languages. And how you speak these languages.)

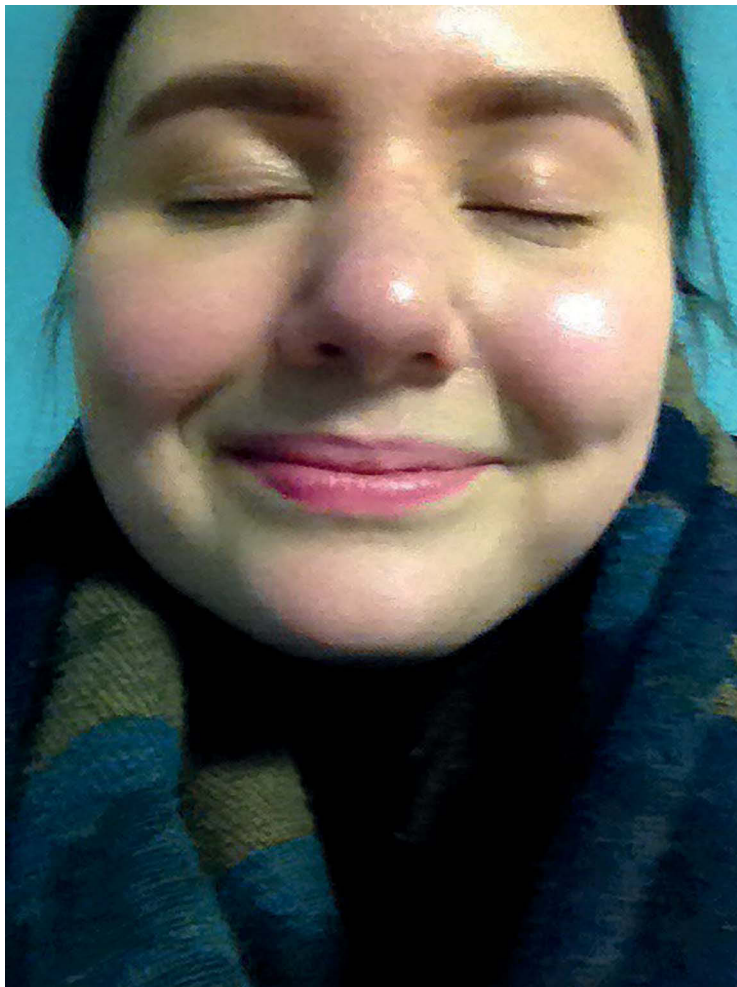
(Parts of the two discussions are described here, the parts that are resonating in her finalised story, the spoken word in one of her native tongues Faroese which is intersecting the Danish she has learned to speak even better after she moved to Denmark. She also made a transcript of the spoken word, as well a translation of the transcript for this thesis, upon my request.)



(8) **The Moon:** My favorite tarot card from the deck. Since moving to Denmark, it's been difficult to connect with nature, since it's a lot less invasive here than on the islands. So I've started to pay close attention to the waxing and waning moon, and the effect it has on my energy and the people around me. It's weird, because it does have an effect on you, but you only notice if you choose to pay attention. I have to work for it to feel connected to nature. Something that happens by itself at home.

Weirdly it's also a lot more difficult to paint in Denmark, probably because of the same thing.

(13) **Sjálvsmynd:** I don't know what my thoughts are on this one really.



Co-Researcher Profile

Name Saga Kapna

Age 23 (1994)

From Greece/Russia and Finland, born in Belgium, but lived in the Faroe Islands since I was four

Lives in Aarhus, Denmark

Moved to Denmark 2013 (Moved to Denmark to attend højskole, and have been living here since)

Education Currently studying Art History BA in Aarhus

Work Bartender in a concert house in Randers

Family Father passed away two years ago at home in Velbastað, mother lives in Helsinki, both brothers currently live in the Faroe Islands. We celebrate Christmas and other holidays in our family home in the Faroe Islands.

(Co-researcher Saga's self-portrait which she provided for this profile).

IN THE FAROE ISLANDS



Bjarni’s Storytelling

Caught between countries
I long for home
Can’t go home when I want
Cause I’m too young

Home again, happy as few
I laugh at grey skies
I smile even though the sweater itches
I smile even though my hair is combed

Mother found her life mate in Denmark
So she had to take me with her
But as soon as I had age
Gone was I

I can’t break between these countries
Cause bonds there’ll always be
To Denmark for visits and work
They’ll follow side by side

Bjarni Nattestad: An English translation of his Faroese Poem, 2018.

Fangaður ímillum tvey lond
Mær leingist so aftur á heimlandsstrond
Eg sleppi ei heim, tá eg vil
Tí eg ei havi vaksnamannaskil

Heima aftur eg gleðist sum fáur
Eg flenni hóast dagur er gráur
Hóast troyggjan prikar er smílið breitt
Fegin hóast hárið er greitt

Mamma í Danmark fann sín maka
So hon mátti meg við sær úr Føroyum taka
Tó so skjótt eg aldur fekk
Eg stakk í posa og sekk

Eg kann ikki slíta ímillum hesi lond
Tí mær verða altíð millum hesi knýtt bond
Til mammu at vitja, og arbeiði við
Tey fylgjast alt lívið lið um lið

Bjarni Nattestad: Fangaður ímillum tvey lond, a poem in Faroese, 2018

Bjarni Nattestad finalised his storytelling with a poem in Faroese and also provided a translation in English to accompany it.

(I have been staying in Tórshavn for a couple of weeks. Bjarni has been very busy but tried to make some time to meet with me for the discussion session. I lived at a good friend's place and she offered to us to use her hobby room for the session. She even made it cozy for us, brought coffee, tea, cookies and candle light. It was dark outside, this evening in February, in Tórshavn, Faroe Islands. It has been snowing.)

First, this bearded man, who has nice eyes, a firm grip of the hand, a warm laughter and an appearance which evokes trust, wanted to tell me something before we start. He wanted to tell me that he cannot “make art”. I am aware we have different ideas of what “art” is and realise how difficult the project is that I have invited the co-researchers’ to engage in. He accepted my “explanations” on what we are “aiming” for in this process, that we are telling stories by using artistic approaches, which means that for example he can write a short story or to make a photograph, or entirely something else. He wanted to tell me about his part 1 story as a photo elicitation. Bjarni has literally made a story of himself, he used old developed photos from the family archives. He did not write texts to the photos so we immersed in his chronologically designed life story in fine detail. First, I listen for almost two hours when he told his intriguing and detailed stories. Then we talked about the photos, shared and discussed the thoughts and insights they bring. He had really put in a lot of work and what started unravelling story by story, moved me.

We dove into stories which start with his baptism and end up with a photo of the present day Bjarni, together with his kids in his favourite armchair home in Argir, Faroe Islands. The memories brought up by the photos he chose to illuminate “his story” with tell about the multiple times he has moved between the Faroe Islands and Denmark because of his mother’s work or his own education. One photo brings us to his profession and education that brought him to Denmark for a few years. He is a police officer. A couple of other photos tell about his passion for metal music. He describes that when he writes police reports his fingers are split into Danish and the head into Faroese. With this he means that both these languages co-exist in this moment of report writing, the hands write Danish and the head thinks in Faroese language. The Faroese police officers are trained in Denmark and even if they are stationed in the Faroe Islands are they part of the Danish police. This is one of the signs of the Danish presence in the Faroe Islands.



Bjarni Nattestad, the smiling boy in the itching national clothes during Ólavsøka, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Some stories are very personal and detailed, but a larger context is emerging. There is a boy who grew up as a man, in-between two places. He talked about the Faroese friend he kept waiting for to visit when he lived in Denmark as a kid. He talked about the Faroese and Danish languages. The importance of the Faroese language is appearing throughout his micro-stories, the different events and situations depicted in the photos. He has a strong wish to pass the Faroese language along to his kids as well. He described how easy, in his opinion, it is for the Faroese to become some other nationality, to forget the language and where the parents come from – to “become Danish”, he

calls it. It's easy to "become Danish" and forget the Faroese language. The Faroese are good in adapting that way, he tells me.

He told how a part of him resisted this "becoming Danish" – as his mind was in the Faroe Islands. There was a discussion concerning immigration and ways of becoming a part of a society. He spoke about ethnicities in Denmark that are left on their own by the government, and that have a hard time of becoming a part of it.

"If your head is always somewhere else, you can't integrate", he says.

From his stories a boy, whose head was always somewhere else, emerged, and hence, the story of that boy is spoken of in his poem. The photograph is a trigger to the poem, as well as the many talks about how his mind was split, and longing for the Faroe Islands, when living in Denmark. And how happy he was when he finally got to visit. And of course, the importance of the language, Faroese is an integral part of his poem.

He says he needed help, as he had trouble to pick one line of thought from these rich and very detailed stories, to continue with the in-depth story. He asked me to give some options, what do I see appearing from his stories. I suggested that he could use the Faroese language in his in-depth story, despite whatever he choose to write about. I asked what he might be interested in looking deeper into. He said he does not want to be too specific when speaking of "a Faroese-ness" or "a Danishness".

"There is a problem if you try to define what is or what is not... for example Faroese... as soon as you go into details, it becomes problematic."

In his finalised story he interconnected many details from the different stories which emerged during the talk over his photos. He decided to write a poem about the boy in the itching national dress, smiling despite the uneasiness, because he has finally gotten back to the Faroes Islands, the place he feels he belongs to, his geographical home. The story of the spiritual home is another one, not addressed here.

(Parts of the discussion is described here, the parts that are resonating in his finalised, in-depth story, the poem in his native tongue Faroese. He also made a translation in English of the poem, upon my request. The discussion is narrated by me and it is based on parts of our hours-long-discussion, which is a joint photo elicitation, a discussion and a workshop. As he did not send me photos and written micro-stories from part 1 task prior to our face-to-face meeting, there is no online discussion before the discussion session and I was not prepared in any way. We embraced the experiment, as he told me the rich detailed stories alongside the photos he chose to narrate his story through.)



Co-Researcher Profile

Name: Bjarni Fróði Nattestad

From: Faroe Islands

Lives in: Argir, Faroe Islands

Age: 34

Moved to Denmark: 1986 - 1990 - Moms education

1994 - 1998 - Mom moved to Denmark

2009 - 2012 - own education

Family: Mother, three brothers and one sister in Denmark.

Father in the Faroes.

(Co-researchers Bjarni & Eija, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, February, 2018)

Mariann’s Storytelling

Hello, my name is Mæja
Welcome to my piece, I'm very excited to have you here
Please judge me for this.

— — —

I think Copenhagen
I think funny accent
I think smaller personal space
I think a lot of talking
I think I don't know many danish people
I think bicycle
I think nice weather
I think better prices

Denmark is a big red balloon in my enormous “I-actually-don't-know-shit-about-that” universe.
I look at the balloon and I don't know where to begin. How to introduce myself, how to get to know it, how to grasp it. Nothing comes to mind. So I pull back, let the balloon float around as it wants and I wonder. How am I going to get to know this thing?

I didn't study in it. I haven't used its language very much the past 12-14 years. I have mostly stayed in its capital.
In this sense, some will say, I am not a typical Faroese person of this time and age.
More over, I don't know much about its political landscape, its royal family, its television, music, theatre, art in general, culture in general.
In this sense, some will say, I'm not Faroese at all.

According to myself, I have once lived inside the balloon. This was in autumn 2015. I lived in a small apartment on Vesterbro with my BFF. She's Finnish/Swedish.
I was very sick at that time. Could not move, could not eat, could not talk, could not be. I needed to rest after many busy years of living. I needed to stop and reflect. I needed peace and quiet. I needed to be alone and anonymous and I got to be that there¹.

Yes, it was easy to go to the balloon - that I didn't and still don't really know personally - because I knew about it and I knew its language. And probably most importantly, I knew many Faroese people inside of it.

During my time in the big red balloon, that floats in my enormous “I-actually-don't-know-shit-about-that” universe, I came and took what I needed, and left.
I have no hard feelings about it.

— — —

My name is Mæja
Thank you very much for coming to my piece
Please judge my for this

¹ NB! I could have done this other places in the world. That's what I tell myself. But it's a lie.

Mariann Hansen finalised her storytelling with a poem written in English, because she likes the English language. She named her work *Hello, I am Mæja*.

(Mariann lives on an island in front of Tórshavn called Nólsoy. I have been invited to meet her for the discussion session at her and her boyfriend's house. I took the ferry, Ternan, to the island. I have visited once before so eventually only turn wrong once before I found their white house. It is a cosy house with a magnificent view over the Nólsoy bay and towards the capital Tórshavn. Usually Nólsoy is the view you are accustomed to.)

Mariann wanted to show and tell about the photos she chose from the family archives for her part 1 story. First, she told me that they are stories about moments of insights and learning, moments of significance. They show the gatherings, the people, both close family and close friends, and how they shaped her story, through situations and moments, both emotional and educational. As she was the first one I am meeting, this was a learning situation for both of us. The photo elicitation became an intimate and hours-long session. First, she showed and told, and I listened. She has 15 developed analog colour photos, which bring a tangibility into the moment, when you also could touch the photos and shuffle them on the table. We organised them in her chosen order. She wrote about the photos and why she chose them:

"A series of developed photographs, from albums in my childhood home. They somehow remind me of moments or periods that have taught me something. They are somehow representatives or ambassadors to strong feelings, truths and flaws, that I connect with.

I choose these photos for the reason that they have made me think and reflect, remember, and I wonder how they, with me, can tell 'my story'. I don't know yet. I don't see 'my story', but I am interested to find out."

(You looked at specific moments that define you, crucial moments, and connected them with the present day- Mariann, the works and the friendships. I was still trying to find commonalities of themes in people's stories, emblems of "belongings", signs of a "Faroeness" – I asked her what the nature means to her.)

11:10 Maybe it means more than I have the capacity to think about each day, because the weather affects me, the air also and I'm used to a view – when I do not have a view, I'm affected by it. *(What is a view to you, I ask.)* A kind of when you see a scenery, I think. *(A natural view, you mean?)* Yes. *(If something is blocking it, you do not have it, you are in a built environment? Like Tórshavn. Or Copenhagen?)* Yes. I immediately feel how absent I can be from nature just by being in the city. It has something to do with ... like here I have this view *(refers to the view over the Nólsoyvík and over to Tórshavn)* it's nice and makes me feel, well, if I did not have it, then I would feel the problem – but I do not feel that the solution is the view, it's kind of normal – but I have to go out in the nature to feel it, to experience it. *(So, it is not only about looking, but also feeling, like with your body, hearing?)* Yes. And this is something I realised just recently, that I can think and see, as much as I want to, but if I really feel

nature I have to go in to it. And I don't have to go far. Just down the house, just up the hill – it's very close by but you have to go, or I have to go there in order to be in contact with it" *(Not just a look out from a window?)*. No, that's when you are inside, in a house, and then it's not the same.

14:34 *(Your story differs a little bit from the ones I got already, from the people who live now in Denmark. Many of them have lived a long time in Denmark and being absent from Faroe Islands, an insight appears, to have a discussion on the topic, I ask, that because she is in the Faroe Islands now, and are not away, from the Faroese nature, you are in it in a way, so you do not miss it or feel an absence from it, because you are here. How about when you lived in Denmark? Did you live a long time there?)* No. Only a half a year. I was there for half a year, I did not leave. *(Can you go little bit back there, what did you miss, in the landscape, did you feel it as a problem?)* In a way, but maybe not, because it was a different landscape that I was looking for, or that I needed. So, it was it was during summer and into winter – late summer and into winter – so it wasn't super warm or super cold – the climate was perfect, and super stable, which is kind of exotic, when it is not changing all the time, like it does in the Faroe Islands – so there was a stability that was very nice. At that time, I was in Copenhagen it was the right time and I didn't miss, not in a way I was craving for it, I can't remember missing it.

(So, you did not have a need to put a picture of the Faroese landscape or a map of the Faroes on your wall to remind you?) No. But in Copenhagen it is easy to have a reminder of home and that is the language – you can hear the Faroese language very easily – you know some people, and it is kind of easy to get in contact with other Faroese people there. So somehow, and the language is very close to who you are, I think – well how you define, how you speak, from yourself, of yourself and in context of yourself. So, if you have a language and you can hear the language, you can in some way feel a home, a familiarity that you get easily in Copenhagen – so in that sense it does not feel so far away from home, in my experience. *(Because you know people there?)* Yes. *(Did you live at Øresundskollegiet or outside?)* I was outside but over a period I was a lot at Øresundskollegiet, but I was mostly in Vesterbro and Østerbro. *(You knew people there?)* Yes, I knew people there and I never felt alone. *(Do you also have Danish friends you would be in contact with, if you were being in Copenhagen, or is it only Faroese?)* It is mostly Faroese. Maybe one. Danish friend. *(But in a way you did not study in Copenhagen, but in Iceland and in Norway – you lived in Copenhagen.)* Yes. Lived and was in-between work and just kind of being there.

Discussions over the photos 6 & 12.

(photo 6) Discussions about the importance of family, but her family now are her friends as she does not have children. She thinks the children are the glue to con-

nect the families. There are dancing people from before she was born. There is a party, people gathering to the same place to dance and have fun. This photo is inspired by the idea of a togetherness that can be used to create relations, getting to know and having people around you, if you are open.

(photo 12) Mariann thinks that sense of home can be extended to friendships. A home is a created thing, how you want to it to be or not. She is talking about the building of a home. She is surprised to make a home, to facilitate a home, in a box, now. She never wanted to be anywhere, always ready to leave – so no belongings – living through a backpack, always ready to leave. She is living the end of her 20's, she might be ready for that "home-thing". Her inspiration to her "nomadic" way of living was the need to not define herself with physical things. She says, that you carry your home within you.

In her finalised story she decided to combine the story from photo 6 where she loses a childhood friend when she moves away, which mark the first time she learned to long for someone. She regained the friendship when she reconnect with the childhood friend in Copenhagen. The photo 12 and the text tell about a sense of togetherness, which also emerged from some other co-researchers' stories.

(Parts of the discussion is described here, the parts that are resonating in her finalised, in-depth, story. We got an insight that we can talk about one photo for hours as we also did. The photos were the trigger and the questions fuel the discussions. Mariann was the first so we went to great lengths to discuss even tiniest details in the photos and what they sparked as conversation. It is very easy to get sidetracked, but that is a part of an intimate discussion. Not all are supposed to be used and narrated as research. It is about sharing the same space and your time, what also Saga and Mai were referring to, a togetherness where you encounter people because you want to spend time with them and share both food and conversation, without stress or hurry. There is an interconnection and Saga's and Mai's talks resonate in Mariann's story.)



6 : Party at home (left)

I wasn't born at this point, but this is sort of the legend of the home, that my parents created. There are many gatherings and parties and a lot of dancing. Grown ups and children all at once. I remember these parties, but couldn't find a photo from when I was a part of it. I strive to create the same open home, for grown ups and children all at once, where there is fun, laughter, music and dance.

12 : Kindergarten (above)

I grew up with this girl called Durita. She's in red, closest to the wall, chewing something. I'm sitting next to her in a black dress with a collar. She moved to Tórshavn in the first grade and she is the first kid I remember missing. I didn't understand why she moved, it was such a strange concept. And she and I were friends, why separate friends. I kept missing her as I grew older and I wanted, like really wanted, to come in to contact with her again. I have only felt this deep feeling a few times in my life, perhaps never as strong though as when I was 7 and towards Durita. We found each other again as teenagers. Through theatre. Today we work together and research within ourselves from a common ground zero.

Marianns' short text and photos for part 1. 02.2018



Co-Researcher Profile

Name Mariann Hansen

Age 32 (1986)

From Norðskáli, Faroe Islands

Lives in Nólsoy, Faroe Islands

Education BA in Theatre and Performance Making at The Icelandic Academy of the Art

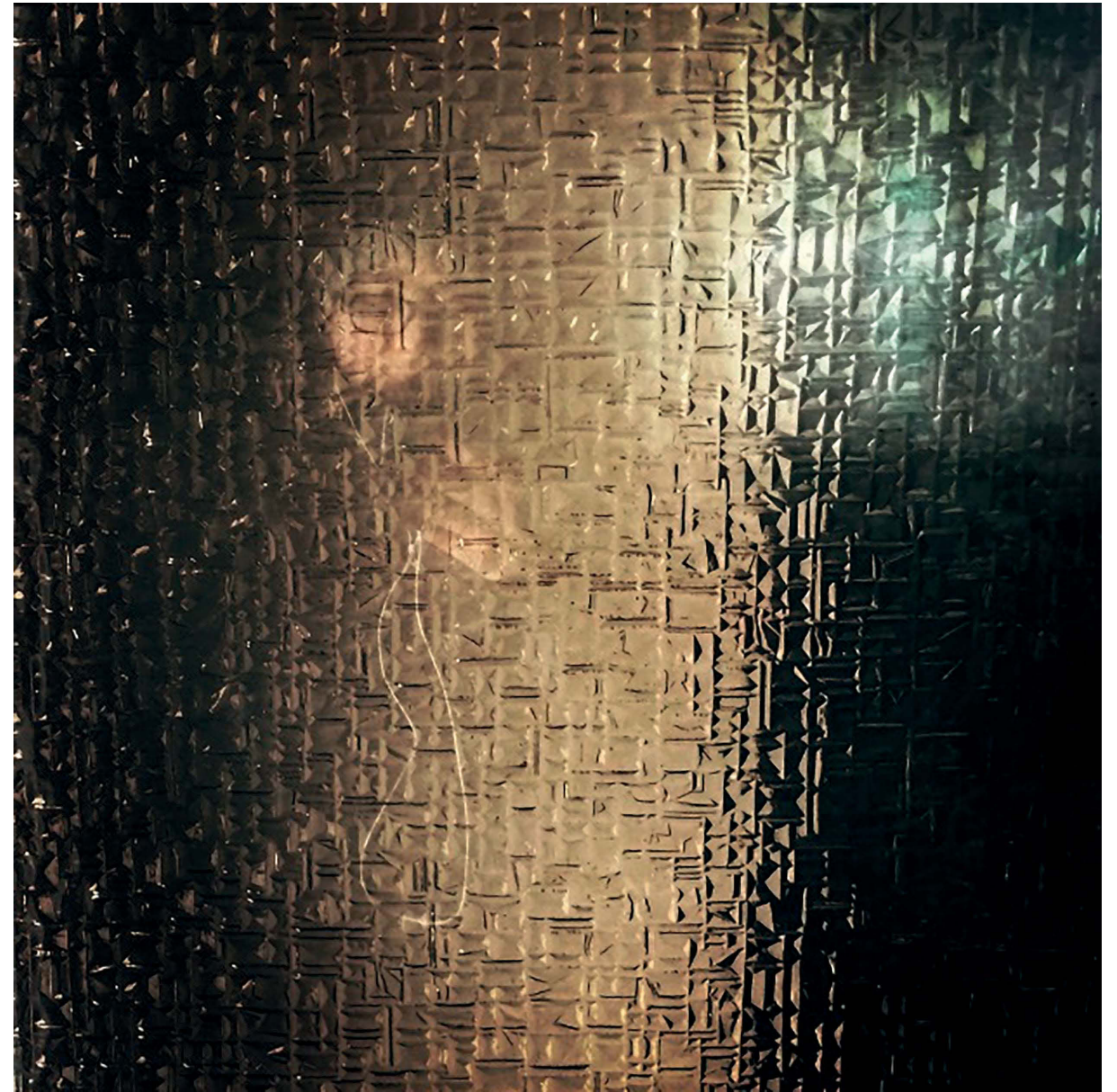
Work Self employed

Mariann lived in Denmark for half a year in 2015. To rest and recover.

Family Almost her entire family lives at the Faroe Islands. She has many friends in Copenhagen, but the past year many of them have moved back to the islands.

(Co-researchers Mariann & Eija, Nólsoy, Faroe Islands, February, 2018)

Maud's Storytelling



Human beings do not perceive things whole; we are not gods but wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable only of fractured perceptions.

- Salman Rushdie

Maud finalised her storytelling with a photograph and an accompanying text by postcolonial author Salman Rushdie. She named her work *Insistere*.

(I met Maud in Sirkus Bar downtown Tórshavn for our discussion session. We sat upstairs where the sofa is, in the nook below the large mirror. The lighting was dim, and there were not many customers, it was a week day after all. There was music in the background, the sounds of the bar, creating the atmosphere.)

Maud wanted to show and tell about her photos she made for the part 1 task as well. She made a set of photos and conceptualised her thoughts in a way I do not want to re-tell or distort. Hence, this section includes a lot of her own narratives of her storytelling process and the photos she has made. There are two different set of photos. In the first she has paired photos under titles in which she looks at contrasts. Contrast between the Faroes and Denmark which relate to her notions of feeling home or not. These photos are about a tangible contrast between landscape, nature and built environment.

The second set are pairings of photos dealing with fractured identities and in which she pondered on a sense of rootedness, and on what she calls fractured identities. She has made parts 1 and 2 as a joint project, and she has already started a powerful and aesthetic visualising of her philosophical pondering. There was no specific need to guide her but we discuss her thoughts in the discussion session. She wrote about this sense of rootedness that accompany the photos:

*"A divided sense of identity, belonging nowhere or everywhere.
The loss of the historical bond to a place that deeply connects you to the surrounding environment and the beings living there, be it creatures or people.*

The gain of openness, of the sense of being able to survive anywhere, of being flexible, to have been blessed with an insight into many different cultures."

She has also written a text where she talks about her identification as a Faroese person which I attach here in full:

"I have always identified as being Faroese, even though I have spent the majority of my life outside the islands. What I perceived to be key Faroese cultural values have been my values throughout my time abroad, making it harder for me to assimilate to the cultural values of the places where I resided.

I have returned to the islands after almost two decades away from them.

For a long time, I felt that the Faroe Islands were my magic wonderland - a safe, untouched, warm place, that I could return to, and be enveloped by, whenever I wanted.

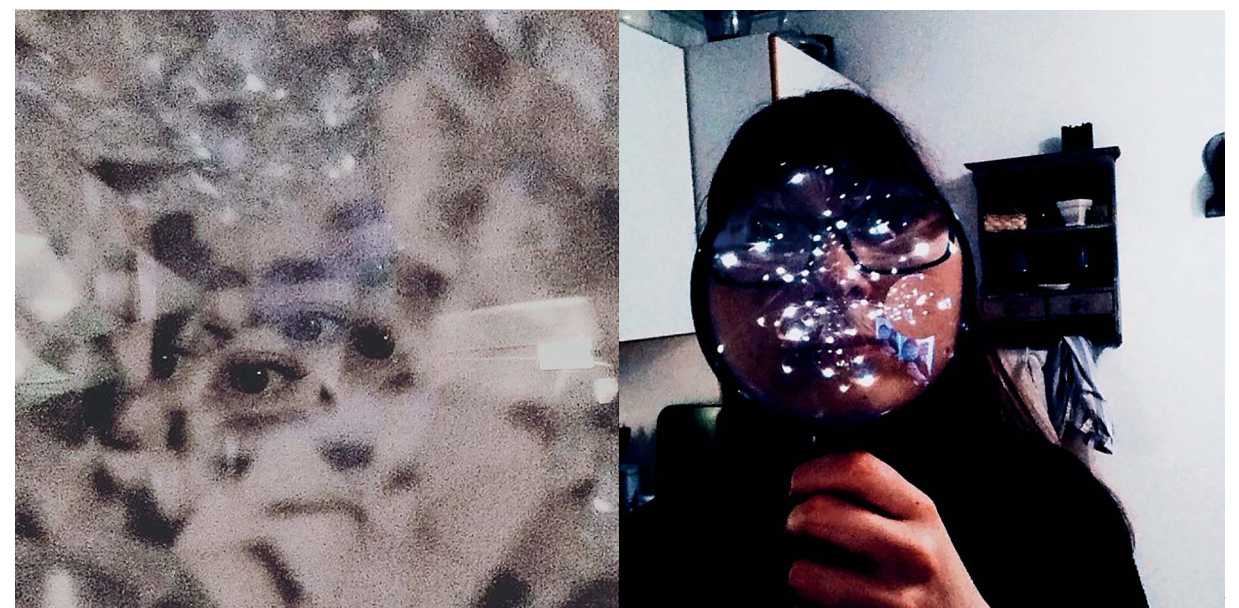
I have never felt like anything other than Faroese. I have never connected fully to any other culture. Yet my connection to the islands has varied across the two decades that I've been away, and the values, history and traditions, that are an integral

part of the people living on the islands, have now become somewhat foreign to me. Maybe foreign is the wrong word. They seem familiar, but hazy, like a dream that you cannot articulate properly. There is a pride in knowing your heritage, your family line, the weather and how to read it, the intricacies of the language, the local cuisine and knowing how to prepare the Faroese traditional courses, the flora and fauna, the who's who of anything from politics to your local bar, the cultural icons and the masters of literature and art. In this regard, I feel like a foreigner (albeit one that really has prepared for the meeting of a new culture) in the Faroe Islands, slowly learning the ways of the locals.

Because my idea of the Faroe Islands was this of a magical place, by moving back and creating a new life there, I have lost this place. The islands are now something familiar, which slowly loses its dreamlike quality, as all the many nuances, the good and the bad, and the in-between, become apparent to me. I miss having that magical escape in the back of my head."

During the discussion session we talked about the photos and her thoughts on fractured identities. She dug deeper than describing fragments of her daily life. This is what the philosophical pondering of this thesis is trying to reach as well, a deeper sense of belonging.

Below are two of her photos, Looking Glass – Distorted & Magic Flexible – Open - Insight, as examples dealing with fractured identities.



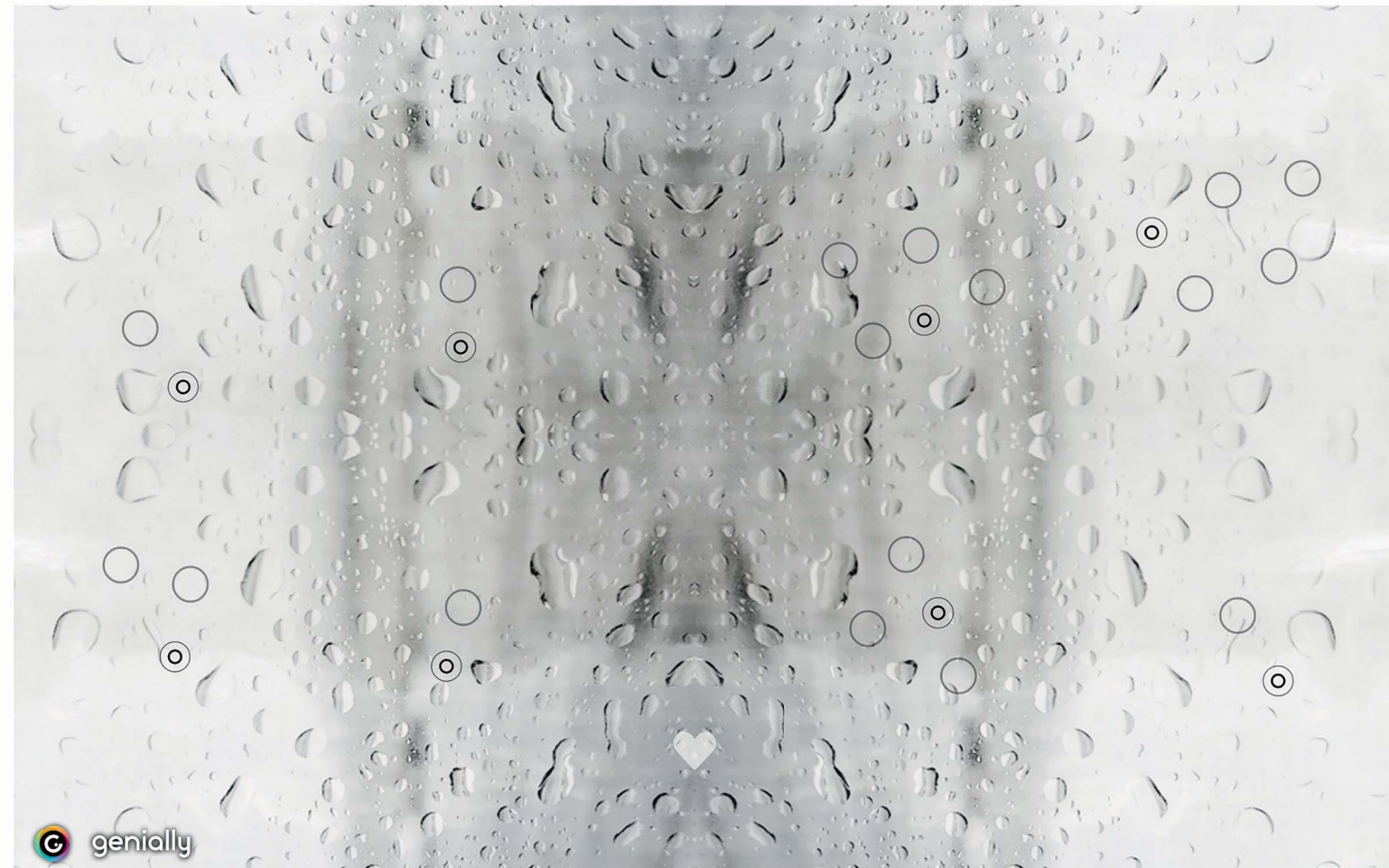


Co-Researcher Profile

Name Maud
From Hoyvík
Lives in Tórshavn
Age 35
Moved to Denmark (1996/97, then again in 1999)
The first time for boarding school and the second time with my family.
Education Master in English and History
Work Self-employed
Family Mother, father and sister (with kids) live in Denmark.
Brother lives in the Faroe Islands but is about to move to Iceland.

(Co-researchers Maud & Eija, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, February, 2018)

Multi-Layered Digital Story



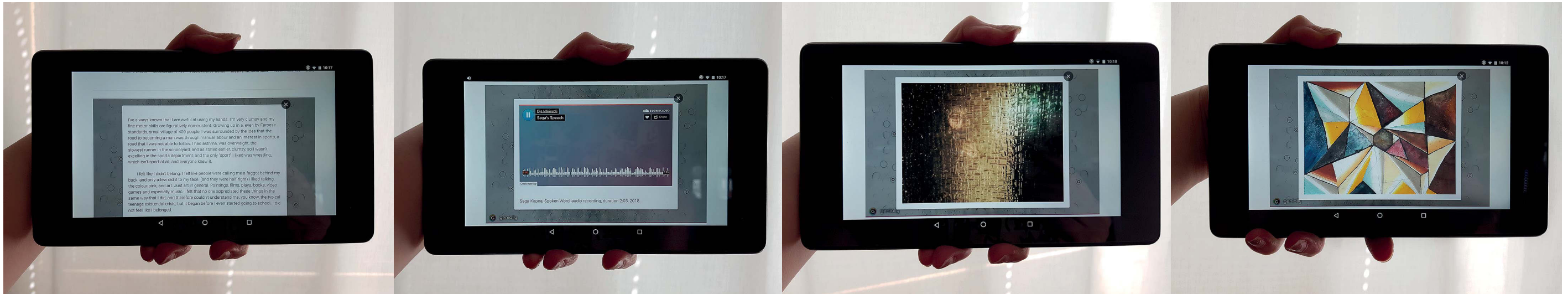
Screenshot of the interactive image.

The co-researchers' rich and complex stories are assembled as a collaborative multimedia non-fiction story using interactive digital storytelling as a format. The collaborative story is compiled as an interactive image which is accessible on a webpage on my website www.eijamakivuoti.net/missing-the-mountains/#/missing-the-mountains-story-of-stories/

The interactive image is at the same time a presentation of the co-researchers' stories as different fragments that are creating a larger entangled story, but also a philosophical pondering visualised of as an awareness that all narratives are representations, i.e. that meanings are constructed through language. And as such, that language is a crude and simplistic representational system that depends on a binary system of opposites to construct meanings (Hall 1997, 2013). The interactive image as a multi-layered digital story takes into account the different perspectives in the co-researchers' stories without the need to re-tell, organise, categorise or code them into one fixed, coherent narrative. The stories are placed on a plane, made accessible to the reader from the interactive buttons which resemble flowing raindrops.

The digital non-fiction story, the interactive image, is published online so that a wider audience can have access to it and as such an "online interactive documentary, by its nature of being on the net, is accessible to anyone with a fast enough bandwidth" (Brasier, H., Hansen, N., Munro, K. & Weidle, F., 2018). As the storytelling process is multidisciplinary in its expressive approach, the interactive image takes into account the different multimedia approaches the stories are created in, the video and audio stories, without them losing their essence as they are not textually transcribable (Leavy, 2009). The reader has to open the stories one by one by clicking on the animated raindrops, the interactive buttons. The stories open as separate windows on top of the interactive image. Behind each button, the story emerges as a fragment that adds a new layer to a larger story. The reader constructs the interpretation of this larger story. The intention is to make the reader aware of being a part of this construction of meaning by the interactions, the immersion with the stories. The reader has to do something to access and construct the larger story – it is a cumbersome, tactile visualising of the idea that also the reader is a part the construction of meaning (Hall 1997, 2013; Rancière, 2009).

The interactive story emerges as an "end-product", as a multi-faceted representation resisting a linear, fixed narrative or a fixed meaning (Bhahba, 1983, 1994, 2002; Ching, 2017; Hall, 1990, 1997, 2013; Chattopadhyay, 2017). This



fragmentary form is also an interpretation that emerged from the way the co-researchers created their narratives in the storytelling process, as fragmentary micro-stories creating a larger story. This insight is also taken into account in the form of this written thesis inquiry, as its written and visual narratives are fragmentary, adding layers to a larger story. Not as a fixed narrative, but a narrative which is flowing and open-ended. This is of course an artistic approach and it not fully possible to maintain throughout the thesis narrative as written language in its essence is linear.

The interactive image presents the co-researchers' finalised stories as digital content: images, texts, audio, video. The interactive elements and technical tools make it possible to present the complex and rich stories created by the co-researchers on one plane. It is a visualisation of the collaborative storytelling where all are translators and narrators at that same plane, entangling as a virtual representation (Kester, 2004; Rancière, 2009). The different stories are separate, but merge into each other in different ways, depending in which order you, the reader, choose to immerse yourself in them. Beyond the ticking heart, one of the interactive buttons in the image, is a short description of the storytellers and of the storytelling process.

The background for the interactive image is digitally layering two Instagram photos I took from the Faroe Islands and Denmark in Photoshop. I used the layer effects exclusion, difference and multiply to blend the images – the words are used in many of the theories I read, and now they are embedded as layers in the background photo, even if no one sees or knows that, unless I reveal how I made it. So now you know. This background photo is one of the visual interpretations, a Visual Thinking (Crystallisation) photograph pondering on the complex entanglements of the theoretical trajectories, the methodology and the storytelling process. The interactive image is made in Genially, a paid online platform for creating interactive online content. I can not afford to pay for the version in which the Genially logo can be removed, hence from now on the logo is a part of the online digital interactive story, as well as are the Vimeo and SoundCloud online platforms on

which the video and sound files are uploaded in order to be embedded in the interactive image.

Each finalised story is a rain droplet, a tear in the fabric of belonging, a flow in the ocean, a movement back-and-forth between two – or more – places or positions. The story of self in a space of in-between, in relation to multiples places of belongings, described as something in a constant flux. It is visualising the awareness and the overlapping of multiple dimensions which emerge from the co-researchers' stories (Said, 1984, 2002). The story constantly changing, in-flux, impossible to fix into a linear narrative, a storytelling-in-constant-progress as new connections can be added to this image – as an multi-vocal assemblage of the co-researchers' rich, complex and evocative stories (Bhabha, 1983, 1994, 2002; Ching, 2017; Hall, 1990, Said, 1994, 2002; Salazar, 2008).

There is another layer built in the idea of the interactive image. As the co-researchers' stories are an expressive assemblage which tells about feelings, experiences, insights and thoughts on a variety of issues which relate to notions of belonging or not-belonging the attempt is to convey an intimate and immersive encounter with the reader. As the "final narrative" is created by the person engaging with these fragments and micro-stories presented in the interactive image, this assemblage of stories hopefully resonates within the reader, you, while you immerse yourself in them. One by one, you add a fragment, a layer, to a larger story which you create, construct, produce. It is a fleeting story, constantly in-flux, changing after each piece is added and experienced by you, the reader – it has no beginning and it does not end here. If this collaborative, multi-layered story intrigues you, you need to find out more by yourself. As Mariann described, to find new connections to add to this story we are now telling.

Now you, the reader, have become a part of this story created by multiple people and those are interpreted by you, the reader. Now you carry these stories with you and even so, literally, if you engaged with these stories through your mobile device which you carry with you (Pink, 2015).

Above photos of the artworks in the interactive image as pop-up windows. From left: Fríði Djurhuus (written text), Saga Kapna (spekn word/audio), Maud (photograph) and Bjarur F. Clementsen (painting).



Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): A Cartography, Meaning in Constant Flow, Instagram post, 2018.

Final Thoughts, For Now

The aim of this collaborative research inquiry was to explore how sense of belonging manifests through storytelling. It was a method devised and imagined as an ethical intervention. The theoretical trajectories make me reflect critically on the collaboration and how it was conducted. These critical reflections are made visible throughout this research presentation in different sections, not as a separate analysis or a conclusion, but as an integral part of the thought process which is the ideological dimension in this thesis research. Those translate into practice through the way we conduct the storytelling process and how that is made visible.

Learning to Listen.

I reflect on what it is to learn to listen, to listen and to attempt to give a space for different points of view in a narrative and to counter a fixed narrative (Bhabha, 1983, 1994; Chattopadhyay, 2017; Hall, 1990, 2013; Rancière, 2009; Salazar, 2008). In a way this reflection become both a philosophical pondering on representation and my power in this research, on the power I have as a narrator and it takes many forms, hence in many forms I attempt to counter that power.

This research project is an imaginary of an attempt towards a more ethical way of collaborating with people in a joint project and to tell stories together. It becomes very different from the initial plan. The attempt is not to analyse what the co-researchers' stories mean. I let the stories created, the co-researchers' works of art and the descriptions I narrated of our discussions speak for themselves. For me as the artist-researcher this project is foremost a lesson on how difficult it really is, in practice, to give a space for the others to speak for themselves. And to be aware of the lurking power during each step of the process and to resist the need to start to speak on behalf of the co-researchers. This resistance avoids to label or narrate the co-researchers' stories. The stories that the co-researchers create are the products of this resistance. They taught me that there is not one, linear narrative, and therefore, I choose not to make a linear narrative.

It is a process, a design for storytelling that works, perfectly, but also not, as what emerges, through the multiple stories and through discussions, is an overpowering sense of how fragmentary this is, all these situations, movements, connections. And then, what becomes "the story of this storytelling"? In our discussion session, Mariann Hansen, one of the co-researchers, shares her interpretation of what storytelling is. She says that the story becomes a story by adding details, making connections, re-telling the initial story one heard – there are all these stories, all these details served, re-told, put into existence, in order for new connections to be made.

What emerge from the encounters, our joint sessions and the stories shared are foremost experiences following the thoughts by Bhabha (1994) and Hall

(1990, 2002, 2013) which describe the views of both culture and identity as something in constant flux, told and re-told, re-shaping, flowing. The co-researchers pointed out to me as I had naïvely asked them to think about their “Faroeness” or “non-Faroeness” that there is nothing that can be narrated as such. Of course, there are aspects that belong to a sense of “Faroeness” which are more tangible like the food they eat, the landscape they are merged in or the national clothes they sometimes wear for festive occasions. The co-researchers articulate their identity as a set of representations, which we start calling with some of them fragments or fractures (Baily & Hall, 1997).

By digging a bit deeper, very different notions and feelings on belonging and not-belonging emerged. For some a belonging is a belonging to a community which cares for others which then differ from “the Danish” – some differences are good and some are not. Foremost, it is a choice how you want to narrate a belonging or belonging to. There is a notion of different dimensions, a belonging to multiple places and an in-between space where some are not that bothered to be and for some it is a split or a transit (Said, 1984, 2002). These narrations are presented through the co-researchers’ stories which I try to make visible with my best knowledge in this narrative presenting the research.

The greatest challenge in this research process was to find research participants who were willing to engage as co-researchers and to immerse in a demanding storytelling process. Mai, Mariann, Maud, Bjartur, Friði, Bjarni and Saga invested their time and effort. The collaboration became immersive and intimate. The co-researchers gave me their trust and shared their complex, rich and evocative stories of their lived experiences with me. Sometimes those stories got very detailed and intimate. There is no possibility to present all these rich, detailed stories within this thesis inquiry. Who knows what comes next, though. There have been talks about a joint exhibition...

Trinh H. Minh-ha reminds that self-reflexivity that accounts for “the production and the methodology” is not enough to serve as an ethical framework, if the “produced meaning” still deploys a divide and its purpose is to add on structures of social injustice (Minh-ha, 1994). The struggle against simplifying, stereotyping and subjugating one-dimensional narratives, representations, continues, even if we are aware of the constructed nature of the socio-cultural representations (Bailey & Hall, 1997; Salazar, 2008). Therefore, as a concluding phase for this collaborative research investigation, I act and narrate in my best effort to respect and honour the co-researchers’ trust in an ethical way – to not to be “unworthy” of the co-researchers (St. Pierre, 2005) – when I as a storyteller myself present, make visible and share their rich, evocative and complex stories for a wider audience of readers.



Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): The Complexity of Representation, Instagram post, 2018

Feedback on the interactive image
Mariann Hansen, 28 March, 2018

Dear Eija,

I'm so sorry, first I had to think and sleep on your email, and then it ended up taking days to compose it. Her is an attempt to answer your questions.

I don't know how sensitive the criteria is according to the theories your working with/ from, but I don't experience that your aesthetics put the voices in the background. What I wrote wasn't very constructive, it was more that I was so impressed by what I saw, the web-construction - templet, it's maybe called - and that it wasn't linear. When it's comes to websites, my imagination is very poor. You write you have taken the stage. Again, how sensitive your methods are to this, I don't know, but in my opinion you are also a person a part of the project, and to see you in it is not necessarily a bad thing. You construct, you glue, how ever it's done, you will always be a part of it. If you want it to be totally neutral, maybe a white background would be an idea?

At first I didn't think there was too much you. Now I'm not sure. I like it when the deliverer of a story doesn't hide away or tries to hide all personal traces, because you are there, if you want to or not. I know you and what I see - the raindrops, the heart, the colours - it speaks you and I personally like that I see you in it. It gives me the feeling of a conversation, you are talking to us, the co-researchers. I like this part, so no, I don't think there is too much you. The roschach feeling that the background photo generates, asks me "what do you see"? I think it's quite brilliant actually :)

I think the micro stories are a good idea, it adds layers and gives multiple impressions of each co-researcher. Are you maybe going to use some of my photos + text as my micro-stories? I will check with the people in the photos, the ones you'd like to use, if they are okey with it.

Again, I like the heart :) It's warm and insistingly bringing your heart in to this. Or a heart, that this is made with love. I'm a big fan of "a bit silly", as you write. When I work I describe it as cheesy. I always allow myself to be a little bit cheesy somewhere, it connects us if we don't overuse it :) And as academia can be dry, cold, unpersonal etc., "a silly heart" can bridge us common folk to the more academic side of things. And maybe vice versa?

If the selfies should be in the heart, I don't think so. I would imagine I would only see you, hence it would seem too much you. It's not too much you as the selfies are grouped with each "co-researchers voice". Picture, crystallized story, micro stories = the co-researchers voice.

Why you asked us to make "art". Just a thought to your thoughts on this, by asking us to make "art" (I really like that it's written with quotation marks) you were experimenting, looking for a way, to keep your question(s) as open as possible. So not to enclose us on "a right answer", but encourage us to explore with in a headline.

This took me long enough!! Hope you're doing well and good, and that you remember to eat. And get some fresh air every now and then, just 10 min can do miracles :)

Klemm góða!

Mariann

Feedback on the research project
APR 2ND, 9:42PM Bjarni Nattestad

"Eija approached me and asked if I could help her with this project. When she sent me the e-mail containing the premise, I initially considered my contribution very straight forward. But it turned out to be an assignment, that made me reflect deeply on the aspect of 'my story' and my personal relationship between the Faroes and Denmark. It took substantially more time than I imagined, but it turned out to be a investment in long gone memories and thoughts. Thanks to Eija for including me in this project, and expanding my horizon."

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Standing at the window
in our kitchen in Amager East
where I will spend my days
of being an alien in this country

Me and my friend, or rather,
brother, Gudmar

We smoke cigarettes after cigarettes
We talk as we had not talked before
What had been, what was now
Why and how
Things become, life happens

Gudmar, the man who liked to tell stories
Had become a bit numb
He had to escape from a nation too suffocating
to another equally suffocating
Gasping for air, for a future
Through the knowledge of
some one who can build houses

A glimpse of hope in the dark
A future becoming, forming
In the country of his father

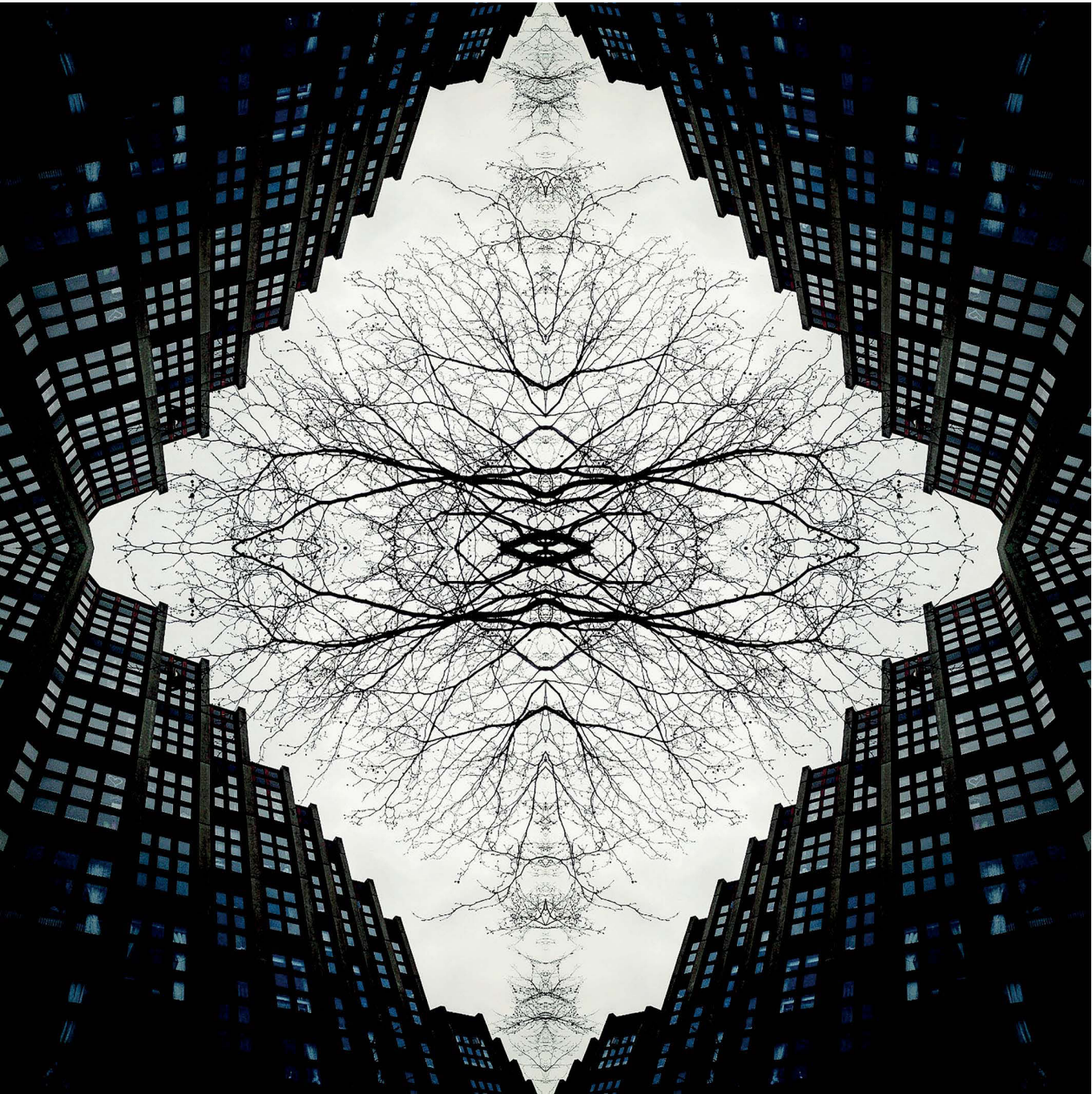
In the country of his mother
Across the sea
Lay the mountains he is missing

Poem re-written from field notes made before the thesis work, 01.2017

Photo: Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): Deferring Meaning, Instagram post, 05.2018

Last but not least, a thank you for all of the people who kept this story flowing.

Foremost, all the co-researchers. Bjartur, Bjarni, Friði, Mai, Mariann, Maud & Saga. (#togetherness #klemm)
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My teachers in the NoVA program. (you blew my world to pieces and then I learned to create new ones.)
All friends, family and extended family all around. (thank you for being a part of my world, you make me belong.)
Art. Music. Beer Talks.



Visual Thinking (Crystallisation): Presumptions and Assumptions Ruptured, Instagram post, 2018

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Artworks and material created in the storytelling process

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Mai Jacobsen

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